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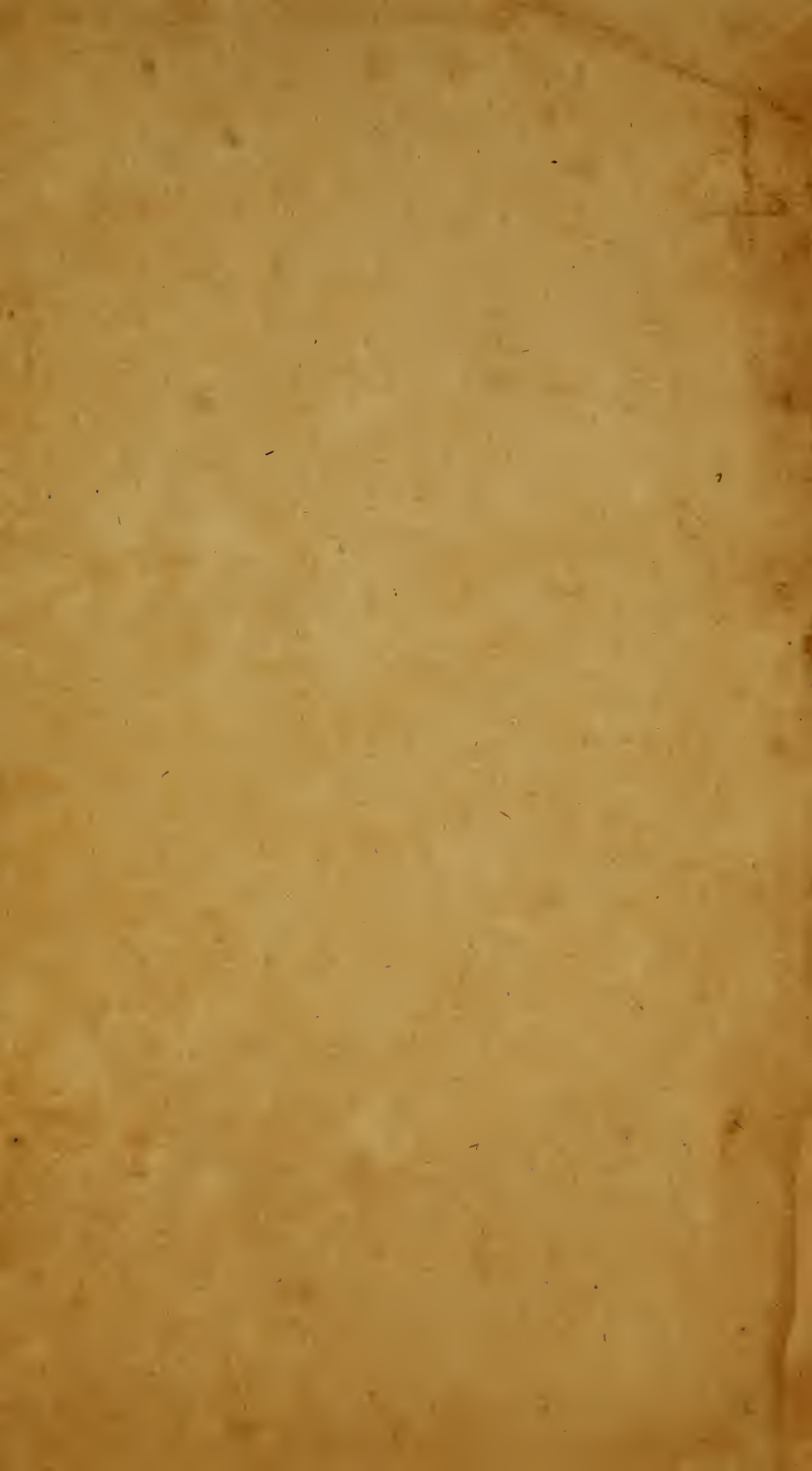
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THE
Moral Philosopher.

V O L. II.

BEING A FARTHER
VINDICATION
O F
MORAL TRUTH and REASON;

Occasioned by two Books lately published:

ONE INTITLED,

The Divine Authority of the Old and New Testaments asserted. With a particular Vindication of MOSES and the Prophets, Our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and his Apostles, against the Unjust Assertions, and False Reasonings of a Book intitled, the MORAL PHILOSOPHER. By the Reverend Mr LELAND.

THE OTHER INTITLED,

EUSEBIUS: Or, *The True Christian's Defence*, &c. By the Rev. Mr CHAPMAN.

By PHILALETHES.

L O N D O N

Printed: And sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

THIS Author begins his Preface by declaring himself for *rational* Free-Thinking, and I am as much against *irrational* Free-Thinking as he; and from hence it might be thought that we must be both agreed, but yet it happens to be otherwise. There is some small Difference between us, which lies only in the Nature of his Distinction, or the different Sense and Meaning of the Words *Rational* and *Irrational*. He thinks that *rational Christianity* is necessarily connected with *Judaism*, and that the Truth of it cannot be proved without the Authority of *Moses* and the Prophets; but I am of a quite different Opinion, and take this to be a false and

a 2 dangerous

dangerous Principle, that is inconsistent with Christianity, and must, in its natural, necessary, Consequences, subvert and overthrow it. I agree with the Author, that every Man's Pretensions to Reason ought to be examined; and accordingly I have followed him through all his Pretensions, which has cost me some Pains, but may not I doubt be of equal Use and Advantage to the Reader. For though such an Examination and Defence might be necessary for the Sake of those who cannot see a Sophism from an Argument, or who can go no farther than they are led; yet the intelligent Part of the World, I am satisfied, could need no such Help.

This Writer makes a glaring Appearance and lofty Sound with the Words, *Christianity, Inspiration, immediate Revelation, &c.* which he often repeats with an Air of Triumph, without affixing any distinct Ideas to the Words themselves. He talks much of *Revelation above Reason*, and of Doctrines which

which we are to receive upon the Foot of *Authority*, abstracted from any Reason or Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding. But how is this *Authority* proved, which is to be the Ground of Truth? Why by *Miracles*. And what natural, necessary, Connexion have Miracles, or the Power of working them, with the Truth of Doctrines? Why really none at all that this Author knows, or is able to make out, as will plainly appear afterwards, and in due Place. The Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Revelation above Reason, and the necessary Connexion of this, with the Infallibility of human Authority, is, for ought I can see, the great Foundation upon which this Author has chosen to support Christianity. But certainly this cannot be that eternal, immovable, Rock upon which Christ has built his Church, and against which no Powers of Earth or Hell shall ever prevail. But if this Foundation should prove to be nothing but Sand or Water,

and uncapable of supporting such a Weight, this Author, and others who have been building such Castles in the Air with him, must look to that, for I am sure that real Christianity will stand better without their Foundation than with it, and must stand when their Castle is fallen, and their enchanted Island sunk. And whatever Connexion there may be between *Miracles* and *Truth*, I doubt not but to make it appear that there is no Connexion at all between *Christianity* and *School-Divinity*.

Truth, like the Sun, shines with its own Light, and is the natural Object of the Understanding, as visible Objects are of the Eye, or visive Faculty. It may indeed be differently modified and diversified, and its natural Position and Appearance altered, like a natural Image in the Focus of an Optic Glass. It may be magnified or lessened in any given Proportion, made of vast Consequence, or of no Consequence at all, placed
close

close to the Eye, or at an infinite Distance, and represented as within or without, above or below, the Glass, just as the Opticians please. And this is the Art of *Spiritual Scholasticism*, or *Systematical Divinity*. Such a Glass they make of Scripture, and just such a Use they apply it to. And from hence one would imagine, that they must use very different Glasses, though they all vouch it upon their Word and Honour, that they use one and the same infallible Glass, constructed upon the same Property and Principle of Vision, without any Thing of Art or Deception. Such false Lights and infatuating Guides must Men be, when, setting aside the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, they pretend to direct and steer us by *Divine Authority*. This is a Pretence that may equally serve any Purpose, and has in Fact been the real Foundation of all the Imposture, Superstition, and false Religion in the World. All Supersti-

tion has ever shewn to this glaring, deceiving, Light, against the Light of Reason and Moral Truth, which it cannot bear, and will not be tried by.

It is a first Principle with this Author, which he every where supposes, but cannot prove, and dared not attempt the Proof of it directly, that the Miracles were wrought in Confirmation of the Truth of the Doctrines, which could not otherwise have been proved or received as *Divine*, or as *coming from God*. But I have sufficiently confuted this weak and groundless Pretence, and shewn that there was another very important End of the Miracles antecedent to the Proof, or any Proposal and Consideration of the Doctrines, and that till this End had been obtained, no farther Step could have been taken among the *Jews*. And this was to procure Admission to the Prophet, and Attention to his Doctrines. For this People would never have received any Man as a Prophet, or paid the least Regard to his Doctrines,

Doctrines, though they should have been ever so clear, rational, and demonstrable in themselves, if the Teacher had not wrought Miracles. This was the Way in which they had been always brought up, or the Pedagogue-Discipline of that dark Dispensation. But they had never known, or been taught, any Thing of the necessary Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things in their own Nature, antecedent to any positive Will or Command of God. And though they were now to be brought into a clearer Light, taught the right Use of their Understandings, and let into the Reasonableness and Fitness of what was required of them; yet they must be brought to such Attention and Consideration in their own Way, and nothing less than Miracles could have done it. But this Author and they who think in his Way, seem to have as gross Notions and Apprehensions of divine Authority and positive Commands, as the *Jews* themselves had. They thought that God at sundry

dry Times, and on certain Occasions, appeared and spoke to the Prophets, and gave out his Commands by Word of Mouth, or in some visible, sensible, Manner, as Authority is conveyed among Men. But more of this in due Place.

This Author seems to lay the great Stress of Christianity, as a Revelation, upon the Evidence of Miracles, as the true and only Proof of it. But what those Doctrines are which necessarily depend on this Proof he has not thought fit to tell us, and perhaps might have found it somewhat difficult to have set down a List of them. He would not, I presume say, that the Being of God, his natural and moral Perfections, our Relation to him as his Creatures and Subjects, and the several Obligations of Truth and Righteousness from thence resulting, with Respect to God and one another; he would not say, that these are the Doctrines and Obligations which depend upon Miracles, and which could not otherwise have been known or
2 proved

proved from any prior Evidence, Reason, or Fitness of Things. Nor can he say that the historical Parts of Scripture, relating to the Prophecies and Miracles themselves, could be proved by Miracles ; since these being Matters of Fact, must depend on the Testimony, and are incapable of any other Proof. Those Doctrines therefore which necessarily depend on the Evidence of Miracles, must be such as had no prior Reason or Fitness in themselves, or no rational Relation to, or Connexion with, Moral Rectitude and Happiness. But what these Doctrines are, we are yet to seek, and are like to be so.

Formerly, the Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Hypostatical Union, of three Persons in one Substance, and two Substances in one Person ; Original Sin, Imputed Righteousness, Justification from Eternity, by Faith without Works, or without any rational free Acts of Obedience in ourselves, the eternal absolute Decrees of Election and Re-
probation

probation by mere Will and Pleasure, with the external Proof of all this by Miracles, and the internal Proof by the Witness and Testimony of the Spirit: These, I say, were the fundamental, essential Points of supernatural Revelation and Religion. And because these high Points of Doctrine were incomprehensible to human Understandings, and beyond the Capacity of all human Faith, therefore they asserted the Necessity of a supernatural Gift of Faith, or spiritual Illumination, to enable Men to perceive and judge of such Things as the natural Man, or Man by his natural Faculties, could not perceive, comprehend, or judge of. Now this Scheme, though it might be absurd enough, was however consistent, and contained nothing of Self-Contradiction in it. For they had a supernatural Faith, or Faculty of perceiving and judging of supernatural Objects, and thereby suited the Faculty to the Object. But some Gentlemen and *Sub-Reformers*, who have been rather for mending

mending than new making, have since fancied that they have found out a middle Way, or Medium between Truth and Falshood, Reason and Enthusiasm, Religion and Superstition. They would throw off part of the super-rational Scheme, but not all, and what they do retain, they would prove from the common Principles of Reason, without any Thing of personal Inspiration, or supernatural Gift of Faith in themselves. But by this they have been reduced to a great Perplexity, being continually suspended between two contrary Extremes, and are forced, as Occasion serves, to run from one to another, as Necessity drives them. Sometimes Christianity is a most rational Religion, evidently founded in the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of Things, and then its Clearness, rational Certainty, and intrinsic Goodness, is cried up as the peculiar Excellency of its Doctrines: But at other Times, and to serve other Purposes, Christianity is a Matter of immediate Inspiration, or Revelation above

Reason, which must be founded in mere Authority, abstracted from, and prior to, any Reason or Fitness. And this Authority, of which we can have no other Proof or Rule of Judgment, but human fallible Testimony, they yet most absurdly call it *immediate divine Authority*, and as such would intrude it upon us. But Truth is in its own Nature prior to all Authority, and the Authority of God himself is founded in the Nature and Reason of Things; but to found divine Authority upon human Authority, and leave us no other Rule or Mark to know or judge of it, is a strange Inversion of Nature and Reason. This has been ever the Method of all Impostors, and without which no Scheme of Superstition, Imposture, and false Religion, could ever have been established or supported. But that God should rest his Will, and the necessary Means of Salvation, upon so precarious a Foot as fallible human Authority, without any prior, superior, Test or Rule, whereby to try and judge of it,

it, is altogether incredible ; and how well our Author has supported this common Plea and Pretence of all Imposture, will appear farther on.

I am very sure, that the first Principle which this Author every where supposes and argues upon, is the grand fundamental Principle of all *Imposture* and *Enthusiasm*, and has been always so from the Beginning of the World to this Day. And that this Principle should hold good only in his Cause, or as applied to his Purposes, and not otherwise, is not to be supposed and taken for granted without Proof. And since the Gentlemen of his Stamp cannot reason or argue at all, without some Charge or other of *Immorality*, or *Moral Wickedness* and *Infidelity*, is the common Complaint, which, with great Freedom and Civility, they bestow upon their Adversaries ; I am willing to adjust the Account between *Infidelity* and *Imposture*, with him, or them, or any one of them, whether the Balance should fall on their
Side

Side or mine. It seems, that in this Debate, one Side or the other must not be only weak, ignorant, and mistaken, but morally wicked and ungodly too. This is a Matter, doubtless, of very great Importance, to which the Reader ought carefully and diligently to attend. And, I hope, the People in general will not take a mere Appeal to their Passions, from the great Pretenders to Truth and Orthodoxy. Let them but lay aside Passion and Prejudice, judge equally on both Sides, and make Reason and Scripture the Rule and Test of their Judgment, and we desire no more of them. Criminal Deism, Infidelity, profane Malice and Enmity to Christianity, is a very high and most criminal Charge, and therefore the Proof of it ought to be proportionally clear and strong; or otherwise they who bring the Accusation, and lay it in with such Effrontry, must be looked upon as Impostors and Deceivers of the People, by the whole impartial and intelligent World. In such
false

false Imputations lies the great *Baseness* of such *Accusers*, and yet here it is, that they place their main Strength.

By *Infidelity*, as this Author uses and applies the Word, he can mean nothing but a suspending the Judgment in doubtful Matters, or with-holding the Assent, where the Evidence does not appear strong and convincing enough. Every Man who is not quite so *credulous* as he, and who cannot take Things upon the same Trust, is with him an *Infidel*. But this Credulity and Incredulity, with Respect to the Judgment, or bare Assent of the Understanding, has nothing of a Moral Nature in it. Though the great Weakness and Danger commonly lies on the credulous Side, and Mankind have been always apt to believe rather too much than too little, and have suffered infinitely more by it. And yet one might imagine from this Writer's Use of the Word, that Historical Credulity

lity was the justifying Faith of Scripture, and Incredulity of this Kind the Sin against the Holy Ghost, or something near it. But whether this may be most owing to the Author's Ignorance or Malice, and ill Design, I shall not determine. The Practice of Temperance, Righteousness, and Godliness, from a fiducial Trust in, and Dependence upon, God, and keeping up a constant Sense of his Power and Presence in all our Actions, is that *Faith* which denominates Men *faithful*, and which God will always accept and reward. And the contrary Practice of Intemperance, Unrighteousness, and Ungodliness, without any Sense, Awe, or Fear of God, is that *Infidelity*, or *Unfaithfulness*, which God will highly resent and punish. Had the Author kept to this only Scripture-Sense and Acceptation of the Words, in their Moral Use and Application, he had shewn himself a much wiser Man, and better Divine: But his using the Words in the
natural,

natural, historical Sense, and applying it to the Moral Character, must give any one a shrewd Suspicion, that he is acting a Part which will not bear the Light, and which he cannot be convicted of without blushing.

The Gentlemen who would seem so infinitely zealous for *supernatural Doctrines*, or Doctrines of immediate Inspiration and Revelation, which must otherwise have been absolutely above and beyond any Investigation or Judgment of *human Reason*, they would do well, I say, to come out of the Clouds, and tell us openly and honestly what those Doctrines are, and after what Manner, or upon what rational Principles, they are necessarily connected with *true Religion*. But their great Modesty and Shyness in this Case, makes it evident, that their Zeal is only in Appearance, and that they only put it on as a Disguise, and to serve a private Turn, which they would not have the *believing Laity* take

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Notice

Notice of, or look into. Such Spiritual Guides make it plain, that while they are crying out against *Infidelity*, they have not themselves *divine Faith* enough to speak out their Minds, and to lead the People with Honour and Integrity in the Way of Truth, without Hope of Reward or Fear of Punishment from *Man*. Their Sophistry must be Reason, their Evasions Faith, their Cowardise and Temporizing human Prudence, and their very Ignorance and Air of Importance Divine Knowledge. But Thanks be to God that the Laity begin to open their Eyes, and to see the Difference between Ecclesiastical Realities and Appearances. I had granted the moderate Part of the Protestant Clergy, at least, every Thing in Religion that they could prove, as of any Use or Consequence to Mankind. But this, it seems, was doing Nothing, unless I could have gone a little farther with them, and run into all their doctrinal Inconsistencies, which I am well
assured

assured I shall never do, nor will they be ever able by any Stress of Argument to force me to it.

It must be owned, the moderate Part of the Dissenting Clergy are under some peculiar Difficulties with Regard to their own People, who are generally from the oldest Man or Woman to the youngest Catechumen, Theorists and Adepts in *Religion*, especially the lower and less thinking Sort, who are always wisest in these Matters. They can teach their Teachers, and will be instructed only in their own Way. This is, doubtless, their Unhappiness, and owing to the Prejudice and Power of Education. But humouring them in this, and flattering and soothing them on in their Ignorance, Conceit, and Error, can scarcely consist with the Character of a Gospel-Minister. And therefore they who would make their Advantage of this popular Ignorance and Prejudice, against such of their Brethren as would go farther, and act

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more

more uprightly, must be looked upon as the very worst and most complicated *Impostors*. The common People are every Way capable of being instructed in the grand important Points and Doctrines of Temperance, Righteousness, and Godliness, but they are hardly capable of being made Metaphysicians and School-Divines, or of being instructed in the Principles of spiritual, incomprehensible, and supernatural Religion, which is the great Art and Study of those who aim at securing to themselves an orthodox Reputation, at the Expence of common Sense, and of all Moral Truth and Righteousness. With these Men Mystery is Religion, and wild Enthusiasm is true Devotion.

The different Nature, Ends, and Purposes of Religion, and Superstition, is a Matter of the utmost Importance, without which, as being duly considered and rightly understood, the Reader can form no just Idea of this Controversy.

Religion

Religion is a clear, rational, intelligible Thing, most adequate to the natural Capacity, Reason, and Understanding of Man, and wants nothing but sober, impartial, Consideration to prove and recommend it. It consists in the filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, exerting and discovering itself in the Practice of the several Duties and Obligations of Moral Truth and Righteousness, from the Sense and Influence of God's continual Power, Presence, and Inspection of our Actions, as the Rewarder of good, and Punisher of bad Men. But *Superstition* is a blind, implicit Principle of Obedience, grounded on the Pretence of Divine Authority, without any Foundation in the Nature, Reason, or Fitness of Things. Religion is seated in the Understanding and the Heart of Man, and by its native Power and Energy enlightens the Mind, and purifies the Affections; but Superstition resides in the

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bodily

bodily Senses and Passions, and exerts itself in furious Outcries, unmeaning Sounds, and blind Zeal. Or, in short, Religion is Reason and Common Sense, but Superstition is spiritual Noise and Nonsense. And from hence it is plain, that Religion is purely an internal Thing, and consists in a Temper, Habit, and Disposition of the Mind, but Superstition is merely external, and is confined to bodily Exercise, and external Actions, or to bare speculative Opinions, that cannot affect any Man's Moral Character. And consequently the very Nature and Essence of Superstition lies, in substituting something for Religion which cannot possibly be the Thing itself, and thereby making a Matter of Religion and Conscience of something merely indifferent. Superstition therefore is not properly the entire Subversion of Religion, or the total Absence and Denial of it, but something built upon, and superadded to it, which does not really belong to it, and which

has

has no natural Relation to, or Connexion with, it. And from hence we seldom find much *Superstition* without some *Religion*, though they are generally confounded and pass undistinguished one for the other. And from hence have arisen all the Contests in the Christian World about Religion. For it is not really Religion itself, but Superstition that is the Thing in Debate.

Thus some will not sit, and others will not kneel, at a particular Act of Devotion; some are for the Religion of Cloaks, or grey Coats, and others for the Religion of Gowns, Cassocks, and Surplices; some are for the Religion of Extempore Prayer, and others for the Religion of a Book; some are for the Religion of one outward indifferent Form or Mode of Worship, and some for another, when they are both equally indifferent, and there is no Religion in either, or in one more than the other.

ther. And thus we are continually fighting and contending in the Dark, not about *Religion*, but *Superstition*. To impose such Things under civil Penalties, as Matters of Religion and Conscience, is Superstition aggravated with Tyranny and Injustice; and to refuse a Compliance with them as Matters of Religion and Conscience, when they are not imposed or required as such, is Superstition made still more ridiculous by an additional Weakness and Misapprehension.

Before I had finished my Answer to Mr *Leland*, Mr *Chapman's* Book came to Hand, intitled, *Eusebius, or the true Christian's Defence, &c.* this Gentleman writes with much more Candour and Caution than my other Adversary; but as he had espoused the same Cause, his Argument could not be much different. As to what I observed peculiar in *Eusebius*,

sebius, and thought might deserve some farther Consideration, I have taken Notice of it in a Letter to him annexed at the End. This learned Writer has intirely dropt the Argument of the *Moral Philosopher*, so far as it relates to the *divine Legation* or *Authority* of *Moses*. And he might probably leave this Part of the Controversy to the most judicious and justly celebrated Mr *Warburton*, who had undertaken it before, though he is not yet come to it. But *Eusebius* confines himself chiefly in this first Volume to the Argument of *Miracles*, as a Proof of *Revelation above Reason*. But this I had so largely considered before in my Reply to Mr *Leland*, that I should have thought nothing farther necessary, had it not been in Point of Compliment or Ceremony to so learned and candid an Author. This Gentleman has likewise made some Attempt to prove the literal Accomplishment of the Prophecies, or that Jesus Christ the
common

common Saviour of the World, by a new Law of his own, was the true *Jewish Messiah*, according to the *Prophets*. How far he has succeeded in this must be left to the Judgment of the Reader, but I think I have said enough to shew that he is greatly mistaken.

But I have one general Complaint to make against both my learned Adversaries, and for which I must appeal to the Public. It is this, that they have filled up their respective Volumes only with Declamations and Harangues upon common Topicks, without ever touching upon the great Difficulties, or once coming Home to the main Points in Debate, and which I take to be these two: *First*, The *Infallibility* or *immediate divine Inspiration* of the Biblical Penmen in all their Opinions and Practices, or in every Thing they have delivered down to us, whether Historical, Moral, or Prophetic. And, *Secondly*,
The

The *real Distinction* or *essential Difference* between *Natural* and *Revealed* Religion, and what those *revealed Doctrines* precisely and determinately are, which must be proved by Miracles abstracted from any prior, rational Evidence to, or Connexion of, Ideas in the Understanding. The Intelligent Reader will always keep these two grand Points in View, and then he will easily judge of the whole Argument on both Sides. But the Gentlemen on the other Side, have generally endeavoured to make good their Argument, by appealing to the Passions of the Populace, and condemning as Antichristian, Free-Thinkers, Deists, and Infidels, all those who are not of their Mind. They have been always very sensible of their Strength in this, and should they once lose this Hold, I doubt they must lose their Cause. But whatever may be the Event as to this,
I have

I have nothing more here to add,
but to subscribe myself the candid
Reader's

Most obedient

Feb. 10.

1738-9.

humble Servant,

PHILALETHES.

T H E

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of

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That there was a real Difference and Separation between Peter and Paul, occasioned by the different Gospels they preached; and that Peter himself was a false Apostle and Teacher, whenever he claimed any Authority and Apostleship among the Gentiles, or went about to urge his Jewish Faith among them, proved against this Writer's strong Assertions and weak Pretences to the contrary. His Objections to what I had offered relating to the Apocalypse, considered and answered. The Jewish prophetic Messiahship a national Delusion, inconsistent with the true Faith of Christ, and the spiritual Nature of his Kingdom; this gross Delusion owing to their misunderstanding the Nature of the Abrahamic Covenant of Faith and Righteousness, and their taking it as an absolute Promise and Covenant of Peculiarity with that Nation. What had been said with Regard to the Apocalypse, considered and defended, pag. 237

S E C T. X.

S E C T. X.

What the Author has offered concerning the sacrificial Scheme, imputed Righteousness, or Satisfaction, considered and applied to. The particular Marks of Imposture in the Mosaic Plan of Priesthood and Sacrifices. The Conclusion. pag. 256

T H E

INTRODUCTION.

I Ntending a particular and impartial Examination of what the Reverend Mr *Leland* has offered, in Opposition to the Principles and Positions contained in the *Moral Philosopher*; I shall take leave, in the first place, to settle the general Account between him and me, by which the Reader will be the better able to judge of the true State of the Controversy, and of the Ability, Candor, and Justice, of this Author, in his Management of it.

He has writ a large Volume of two or three and thirty Sheets, in Defence of *Christianity* and *Revelation*, as he pretends; but without so much as letting us know what he means by the Words, what this Revelation is, or what its peculiar Doctrines and Duties are. He has not once defin'd or ascertain'd that *Faith* which he opposes to *Infidelity*, whilst he is continually bestirring himself in the dark, and flinging about his Squibs at *Infidels*. 'Tis certain, that grand essential Article of all religious Faith, that *God is, and that he is the Rewarder of such as diligently seek him*, is not the Faith which he opposes to Infidelity, nor has his Anti-infidel Faith any Relation to, or Connexion with, this. The filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, grounded upon the firm Belief of all the Divine Perfections, and particularly a Trust in God, as the Re-

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warder of good and Punisher of bad Men; all this, I say, is no Part of his Anti-infidel Faith; for a Man may believe and do all this, and yet, in his Account, be an Infidel, an Enemy to Religion, and a wicked Opposer of Revelation. He ought therefore clearly to have defin'd this Anti-infidel or Revelation-Faith of his, and proved the Reasonableness, Necessity, and Importance, of it, before he made such a blind, uncharitable, and most unchristian Use of it. This, one would think, might have been justly expected from him, but perhaps he knew his Business better, and was too much a Master of the Art of unfair writing, and appealing to the Passions, without correcting the Judgment or informing the Understanding.

Had this Gentleman but Courage and Honesty enough to speak out, I doubt not but he would declare, that by the Faith he contends for, and which he thinks necessary and fundamental to Christianity, he means, a firm indubitable Belief, or Persuasion, that the whole Jewish and Christian History contain'd in the Books of the Old and New Testaments, is infallibly and certainly true; especially that Part of it which relates to Prophecy, Miracles, Ghosts, Apparitions, and other supernatural and super-rational Facts. And since the Historians in all this were immediately inspired, and so far under the Direction of the Holy Ghost that they could not err, to doubt of or reject any Part of it, would be to reject the whole, and overthrow all Revelation: This I take to be
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the *Faith* which he opposes to *Infidelity*. He who has this Faith is a sound Believer, and whoever wants it is a systematical Infidel, and ought to be baited and run down by popular Outrage and Orthodox Fury. But would any wise Man, who was really a Friend to any Religion, place it upon a Bottom so very weak, precarious, and uncertain? Or could any the worst Enemy to Christianity, contriving to expose and betray it, have done it more effectually? And does he not see what an Advantage he has hereby given to Atheists and real Infidels? For in this Case, if they can give any plain Instances, or Proofs, of Errors, Mistakes, or Inconsistencies, in the sacred Writers, it will be enough to set aside their Inspiration and immediate divine Authority; for if they were not infallible in one Case, they might not in another; and if they were not immediately inspired in historical Matters, who can prove that they were in Doctrinals? And such are the wretched Shifts to which all these must be driven, who place Infallibility and Certainty in any thing else but the necessary immutable Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things. I think nothing can be plainer than this, that there is no such thing as *historical Infallibility*, but that all Men are liable to Error, not only in remote Facts and supernatural Events, but even with regard to the most common Affairs, and things near at hand. Now had this Author been a fair Adversary, he would either have granted or denied this; and in Case of denying it, he would have attempted

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to prove the contrary ; at least with regard to the Sacred Historians. But he has done neither, and yet argues all along upon a tacit Supposition of such Infallibility, as if it had been a Matter of Demonstration : This perhaps may look somewhat extraordinary, but the Necessity the Author was under is visible enough, and I shall have sufficient Occasion afterwards to exemplify his Conduct herein.

But I am very sure, that this historical Infallibility, and contradictory Supposition of a human-divine Authority, cannot be that eternal, impregnable Rock upon which Christ has built his Church, and against which all the Powers of Earth and Hell can never prevail. This can be nothing else but the eternal immutable Truth, Reason, and Moral Fitness of the Doctrines themselves, as bearing the intrinsic Character and Stamp of Divine Truth and Authority ; and therefore certainly those historical, systematical Schemes, and human Projections, which are so often shaken, and always in Danger, can never be founded upon this immovable Rock. It is true indeed, that History and human Testimony bring these Doctrines down to us, and propose them to our Consideration ; but this is not, or ought not to be, the Ground of their Reception ; we believe them because they bring their own Credentials with them, in the intrinsic Moral Character and Stamp of Divinity, and not upon the Credit or Authority of any historical Vouchers, or living decisive Judges whatever.

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I had laid it down, not as a mere Postulatum, but as a Principle of Reason, which I endeavoured to prove and exemplify throughout the Book, that *Natural and Reveal'd Religion, as to their Subject-Matter, are one and the same*, and are distinguish'd only with regard to the different Method of teaching, or Manner of Conveyance. The Author through all his long Declamations, neither grants nor denies this directly; tho' it is plain all along, that, without making himself accountable for the Proof, he supposes the contrary; and indeed if he had supposed nothing without Proof, he would have given me but very little Trouble.

The Author builds his whole Scheme upon Authority, Divine Authority as he pretends. But what is the Ground of this Authority, and how does he prove it to be divine? Not surely from the Power of working Miracles, for this could no more prove the divine Authority of *Moses* or *Christ*, than of the *Egyptian* Sorcerers. It is not the Power therefore, however great and supernatural, that can prove either the Goodness of the Persons or Truth of the Doctrines. But the Truth of the Matter seems to be this, That the Tree is known by its Fruits; and therefore he that does Good by beneficent Actions is good, and a Friend to Mankind, whether he does it by the Exercise of a natural or supernatural Power; and the only Difference is, that one enables him to do more Good than the other. But still, such Beneficence, tho' exerted and extended by a miraculous and su-

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pernatural Power, can never prove the infallible Truth or Certainty of any Doctrines that should be taught and propagated by such a Person; the Doctrines themselves, by their own intrinsic moral Character, must prove this, if ever it is prov'd at all. The Truth, Certainty, and Importance of the Doctrines, prove the Authority of the Person as divine; but not the Authority of the Person the Truth of the Doctrines, Truth is prior in Nature to all Authority, and therefore Authority cannot be the prior Ground and Reason of Truth. These things are so very strong and clear, that the Author could not meddle with the Principles themselves, and dared not contradict or argue against them directly; and has therefore left all the Principles of the Book, which he pretended to answer, in their full Force.

As this Writer could not explain himself concerning that Faith which he opposes to Infidelity, and which he supposes to be the Belief of Revelation; so he has left us altogether as much in the dark about Revelation itself, which he could not explain, or give us any Idea of. If the Revelation consists in the Moral Doctrines and Obligations of Scripture, all Morality will be Revelation; or if it consists in the historical Facts, all History will be Revelation: But if it neither consists in the Moral Doctrines, nor historical Facts, I wonder where he will find it! At this rate he must go out of the Bible, and look for his Revelation somewhere else. By Revelation one would think should be understood

The INTRODUCTION. 7

derstood the Discovery of some new Doctrines or Duties in Religion, that had never been known before, and which were above the Search or Investigation of human Reason; in this Sense it has been commonly represented by the Learned, and conceiv'd and apply'd by the vulgar and unlearned; tho' as thus taken and understood, it will have but very little or no Foundation in the New Testament.

Christ himself continually appeals to *Moses* and the Prophets, for the Truth of his Doctrines of Moral Rectitude, Peace, and Righteousness, and more than once declares, that he came not to destroy and set aside the *Law*, i. e. the *Moral Law*, or to introduce any *new Religion*, or Terms of Justification and Acceptance with God. And *St Paul*, his great Expositor and Interpreter, and who was the only Apostle that had any Authority or Commission to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles, makes it his chief Business in all his Epistles to shew, that there was no *new Religion*, or *new Revelation* intended to be set up, but that the whole Design of this new Dispensation, and of *Christ's* Mission and coming into the World, was to restore the old Religion, and the true Abrahamic Righteousness, that had taken place before the giving of the Law, and by which *Abraham*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, and all good Men, from the Beginning of the World, had been justify'd and accepted of God. And this justifying acceptable Righteousness, was the filial Love of God, and brotherly

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therly Love of Mankind, the *doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with God; or denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the World.* The Faith which was intended to be introduced and established by this *new Dispensation, or old Religion revived,* was that Faith which makes and denominates Men *faithful,* and the Want of Faith, or Infidelity, was always the Want of Fidelity, or Faithfulness, with respect to the filial Love of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, and such Acts of Moral Truth and Righteousness as must flow from it. Now in all this saving, justifying Scheme, there is not one Word or Tittle of an historical Faith, nor is History any otherwise apply'd, than as it was necessary to prove what was the true original Religion, and Means of Acceptance with God; and this to those who believ'd the historical Account before. But in this Case, none were ever blamed or condemn'd for not believing the History, nor was the History ever quoted or urged against any, but those who believed it before, or professed so to do; and even then it could serve to no other End or Purpose, but, as an Argument *ad hominem,* to convict and condemn Men upon their own Principles and Concessions.

This I hope may be sufficient to distinguish between a mere historical Faith, and that moral fiducial Trust in, and Dependance upon, God, as the Preserver, Guardian, and Rewarder of good Men, which is the only Notion of Faith,

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Faith, in any scriptural, religious, or moral Sense. An historical Faith may distinguish between a wise Man and a Fool, but never between a good Man and a bad. Under this Notion *Credulity* is more dangerous than *Incredulity*, as it renders a Man more liable to be imposed on himself, and to impose upon others. But Credulity and Incredulity, with Submission to our systematical Divines, are infinitely and essentially different from *Fidelity* and *Infidelity*; they may confound these Disparates and Opposites in their Quarrels and Controversies one among another, but they can gain nothing by such learned School-Play with the rest of the World, or ever make us believe that Credulity and Incredulity, are the same thing with Fidelity and Infidelity, or Faithfulness and Unfaithfulness.

This learned Writer knew very well, that he could not confute any one general Principle or Position in the *Moral Philosopher*; but he thought himself very well qualify'd to confute the Application I had made to the historical Parts of Scripture; and here it is that he bends all his Nerves, and exerts his utmost Force. I am so far from declining the Combat he has call'd me to, that I am very glad of the Opportunity he has offered me, to enter farther into that Affair, and to give him all the Satisfaction I am able about it. And to shew how ready I am to oblige him, I shall follow him in his own Method, and consider his several Objections

jections according to the Order in which he has placed them.

But before I come to this, I must here once more solemnly declare, that I had no other View or Aim in writing the Book which has given him so much Offence, but to serve and promote the Cause of *Truth, Peace, and Righteousness*, and to separate *Religion*, true Religion, from that *Superstition* which has always prov'd the Bane and Destruction of it. Superstition is the counterfeit Image, and mock Appearance of Religion, and must therefore be infinitely mischievous wherever it comes to be mistaken and substituted for the thing itself. As the *Christian* Religion is certainly the best in the World, so the *Christian Superstition* is certainly the worst, and has proved more destructive to Mankind than any other. And I hope I shall never be ashamed or afraid to distinguish between these two, and, as well as I can, mark out their Boundaries.

As to this Author's Indignation, and repeated Imputations of *Artifice, Malice, inveterate Spite*, Enmity to Revelation, &c. I can bear it all with Patience, as having been pretty much used to such sort of Treatment, and can expect no other from Men of his *Reach, Capacity, and Charity*. But whether he or I have done most to discourage Truth and free Inquiry, and to support the Implicitism, Presumption, and groundless Hopes of mere nominal Christians, will appear farther in the Course of this Detail.

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VINDICATION

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Moral Truth and Reason.

S E C T. I.

The Author's Supposition of Immediate Revelation and the Doctrines thereon depending, as prov'd by external sensible Appearances, abstracted from the rational Evidence, or Connexion of Ideas in the Understanding, shewn to be weak, vain, and insufficient.

The Nature of Truth, and the several Grounds of its Communicability considered. Truth founded in Nature and Reason communicable by its own Evidence to the Understanding. Truth in Fact by Testimony. Truth which is absolutely above and beyond all Investigation of Reason, or Perception of Senses, not communicable at all, but by immediate, personal Inspiration or Revelation.

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The Evidence of Miracles, as the proper Foundation and Proof of Doctrines which are absolutely beyond the Search and Investigation of human Reason, thoroughly examined, and the Author's Pleas and Pretensions for it considered.

I Had laid down as a Principle, that we can have no certain Mark or Criterion of divine or moral Truth, or of Truth as coming from God, and discovering his Will concerning our Duty; but the moral Reason and Fitness of the Thing, or its Relation to and Connexion with our Happiness. But this Author for several Pages together pretends to be under the greatest Uncertainty about the Meaning of this, and puts several Suppositions, as if it had been one of the most perplexed and unintelligible Propositions he had ever met with; but I believe in Reality he was not so much at a Loss to find out the Meaning, as what to do with it when he had got it. But *pag. 10.* he is pleased to bring himself out of his own Confusion, and to take it as if I had said, *that the Reasonableness of the Doctrine itself, as appearing to the Understanding, is the only Evidence of its being a divine Truth, or of its coming from God.* This is shrewdly guessed indeed. But then, *here again* it may be asked, *what he means by a divine Truth, or a Truth as coming from God? Does he mean a Truth that came by immediate Revelation from God? So he ought to mean, if he would speak to the Purpose.* But I had no Occasion to say this, it not being to my Purpose; and I was not obliged

obliged to follow his Purposes, especially before I knew them. But he adds a Reason, *Since the Question is, as he himself seems to put it, concerning the proper Proofs and Evidences of a divine Revelation*, or how we may know that a Doctrine is *revealed from God*. This Author it seems cannot distinguish between mediate and immediate Revelation; but all Truth coming from God must be by *Inspiration or immediate Revelation*. But if this be so, I presume he and I never received any Revelation or Truth from God; since I hope he would not pretend to Inspiration or immediate Revelation himself. But he will say doubtless, that all *divine Truth, or Truth coming from God*, must have been given by Inspiration or immediate Revelation at first, tho' it may come to us through a long Succession of intermediate Conveyers. But suppose these intermediate Conveyers, as not being inspired or infallible themselves, should mistake the Sense of the first Promulgers, or give us a wrong Account of it? In this Case, there must be either some prior and superior Rule and Criterion of Truth, whereby to judge of the Will of God concerning our Duty and Happiness, or else, the whole of Christianity and Revelation must be left to the Uncertainty and infinite Confusion of History and human fallible Testimony, abstracted from the natural Tendency or moral Fitness of Actions, as conducive to true Happiness. But this, as I imagine, would be but a sandy Foundation for divine Truth, and such as no wise Man would venture any
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valuable, temporal Interest upon, and much less his eternal Salvation. As to this supposed positive Religion founded upon mere Authority, without any other or farther Reason, which is what this Author seems to mean by *Revelation*, there is not any one Point or Article of it in which Men have not been irreconcilably divided, and still remain so; and therefore a Man might as well cast Lots for his Faith and Religion, or put it to any Trial of Hap-hazard, as rest it upon such a footing.

Pag. 11. The Author comes to the two main Questions which are to be distinctly considered. The one is, *Whether those to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, may have a sufficient Certainty, that what they receive by immediate Inspiration, is indeed a Revelation from God.* The other, *Whether other Persons, besides those to whom the original Revelation was made, may have a sufficient Ground of reasonable Assurance, that what those Persons published to the World as by Revelation from God, is indeed a Revelation from God, and is therefore to be received and submitted to as such.* These are indeed two very important Questions, and I shall attend to the Author's Reasonings about them the more carefully, because the whole Controversy between him and me must in a Manner depend upon it. That God then may immediately and directly, if he pleases, communicate his Mind and Will concerning our Duty and Happiness to any Man, or Number of Men, and enable them to communicate the same to others

others upon sufficient Grounds of Belief, I readily grant, and so far this learned Man and I are agreed. But the only Difference is concerning the Nature, Foundation and Reason of this Communication or Communicability of *divine Truth*, or Truth which relates to our Duty and Happiness, in Obedience to the Will of God; and herein there seems to be the greatest Distance possible between this Author and me.

The different Nature of Truth, and Manner of communicating from one Man to another, in a human Way of Conveyance, is a Matter of the utmost Consequence, upon which all Science, Religion, Morality, and History must depend; and yet this has been very little considered or understood, especially by the scholastick systematical Divines, who, under a Pretence of more Learning or clearer Illumination than others, have never failed to perplex and confound Mankind about Religion, as if it was a Thing contrived on Purpose to be always talked of and contended for, but never understood. But amidst all this Confusion, I think it is very plain, that whatever is true to us, or true to human Understanding, must be either *scientifically* true, or true in *Fact*. The one depends on the abstract Nature and Reason of Things, as eternally necessarily and immutably the same; the other, upon the Perception of the Senses originally and immediately, and mediately upon the credible Testimony and Attestation of those original Perceptions and Facts, to those who were not
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the Eye or Ear-Witnesses. These, I think, are the two different Sources of Truth, and Methods of conveying it, so far as human Understanding is capable of being inform'd in a natural Way. The Truths of the first Class, or such as are scientific, being eternal and immutable, as founded in the necessary Relations of things, in the Agreement or Disagreement of their Ideas, must appear to all Understandings alike, and always the same, when once they come to be proposed in their natural Order, and perceiv'd by the Mind. In this Case Truth is to the Understanding, what visible Objects are to the Eye when set in a due Light, and at their proper Distance. This scientific Truth has been commonly distinguish'd into *Natural* and *Moral*: The first includes such scientific Truths as have no direct immediate Relation to *Moral Practice*, and therefore cannot affect a Man's moral Character, or denominate him in this Sense *good* or *bad*, *virtuous* or *vitious*, such as are the Truths and Principles of the Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy. But scientific moral Truth is that which relates to moral Practice, and discovers to us the necessary Relations and Qualifications of Actions, as they are connected with our Happiness and well-being, and such are the Truths concerning the Being and Perfections of God, and our necessary Relation to him as his Creatures, Subjects, and absolute Dependents, from whence we derive our very Existence, and all our Happiness or Capacity, and Possibility of Happiness.

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And from hence clearly and necessarily follow the moral Obligations we are under, of owning him in these natural necessary Relations, and of imitating him to the utmost of our Power and Capacity in all his moral Perfections of Truth and Justice, Mercy, Beneficence, and Charity, &c. these necessary natural Relations which we stand in to the supreme Being, and the necessary moral Reason and Fitness of the several Obligations toward God and Man from thence arising as before-mentioned, is a certain Proof to us, that such moral Conduct is our Duty by the positive Will and Law of God; since he cannot but will according to Righteousness, Justice, and Truth, as founded in the necessary natural Reason and Relations of Things. And if he is thus in the Nature and Reason of Things, the wise and righteous Governor of the World, it is certain that he will reward good Men, and punish the wicked, as Reason and Justice require. And this is a more certain and infallible Manifestation and Revelation of God to Man, than any historical Proof can amount to.

This moral Truth, or the Reason and Fitness of Actions, as founded in the Nature of Things, and as necessarily related to, and connected with, the Happiness of moral Agents, is what I, with others, call divine Truth, or Truth coming from God; the antient sacred Moralists called it emphatically, and by Way of Eminence, *Wisdom*, or *divine Knowledge*, and they who were most eminent and remarkable for the Study, Improvement, and Application of

this divine Truth and Knowledge, or spiritual Wisdom, were looked upon as inspired and taught of God. And I take it as certain, that this is the most peculiar Mark of *divine Favour*, and the special Act of *divine Assistance*, whether it comes from God mediately or immediately.

But the other Class of Truth which I mentioned is Truth in Fact, or such as is perceived and manifested by the Senses. The highest Evidence or Proof of this Kind is the immediate Perception of the Senses under such Circumstances of Persons, Facts, and Objects, as leave no room to doubt of any Deception. But below this, the Degrees and natural Grounds of Probability are vastly different, and such as need not be insisted on here.

But our spiritual Scholastics, or systematical Divines, have found out a third Set or Class of communicable Truths, which are neither scientific nor historical, and which cannot be derived either from our Reason or Senses; and this they call *Inspiration*, or *immediate Revelation*. In Consequence of this, besides Matters of Reason and Matters of Fact, they have their Matters of *Faith*, *divine Faith*, which are not properly the Objects either of Reason or Sense, but of this *divine Faith* as a Faculty, Principle, or Gift of perceiving and judging of Things above all human Reason or Sense. And from hence as natural Reason and Sense are necessary to perceive and judge of their proper and respective Objects, so the supernatural Illumination of the Spirit is necessary in order to a right Perception

Perception and Judgment of the Matters and Objects of this spiritual and divine Faith. This is the common Cant of those Men, which I shall consider and examine a little farther.

In the first Place then, 'tis I think very plain, that any Truths or Doctrines which depend intirely on immediate Inspiration or Revelation, and which are above and beyond the Investigation, Search, Perception, or Judgment of natural Reason, must require a supernatural Light or Illumination to perceive and judge of them. And therefore they who have asserted the Necessity of a personal Inspiration, or supernatural spiritual Illumination of every Man, in order to perceive and judge of these Doctrines and Truths of immediate Revelation, have been consistent with themselves, and proceeded upon the only Supposition that can render their Principles so much as intelligible. The natural Reason and Understanding of Man can perceive or judge no more about these supernatural Truths and Doctrines, than a blind Man can of Light, or a deaf Man of Sounds. And therefore when you talk to them of these Matters, upon the Principles of Reason, you only move their Compassion or Indignation to find that you have no better or higher Light, and that you should pretend to judge of spiritual Objects and Matters of divine Faith, without a spiritual Faculty or Gift of Discernment. But there are others, who, tho' they talk much in the same Way, and really proceed upon the same Principles, would yet seem to be more rational. It

is true say they, That the Truths and Doctrines of pure Revelation, or the Doctrines of revealed Religion, as distinguished from the Religion of Nature, could not have been known at first; but by an immediate Inspiration or Revelation from God; but then, when once they are thus discovered and made known, the common Reason of Man, may so far perceive and judge of them, as to have sufficient Grounds for receiving and believing them, as coming from God, and depending on *divine Authority*. Thus the Matter is represented by those who would be thought in good Measure *Rationalists*, and who would not quite lose and confound themselves in the dazzling overpowering Light of *divine Enthusiasm*. This may look plausible, and is the common Way of getting off, and yet when it comes to be examined, it will appear to be no better grounded than the other Supposition of a personal Inspiration, or supernatural Faith, Illumination, and Gift of Discernment. For I would here ask, what this supposed divine Authority, by which we must judge of the Will of God concerning our Duty, is founded upon? Not surely on the prior Nature and Reason of Things, or the moral Fitness of Actions, as constituting our moral Rectitude, and therefore necessarily connected with our Happiness. This indeed would be a Demonstration and Manifestation of their being agreeable to the Will of God. But then this would be making the Authority depend on the prior Nature and Reason of Things, and Fitness of the Actions, and
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not such Reason and Fitness upon the Authority, which in this Case would be contrary to the Supposition. These Gentlemen therefore ought to prove their supposed Authority from some Principle or other, that is antecedent to the Consideration of any Truth, Reason, or Fitness of Things and Actions; and this can be only a personal Inspiration, or supernatural Faith and Illumination of the Spirit, which they who are consistent in this Way always assert and stand to. The compounding Gentlemen therefore who have endeavoured to strike out a new Way between the two Schemes have been most of all mistaken, and, by halving and mincing the Matter, have left themselves no solid Ground or footing at all.

The great Question here is, whether God has revealed such a Thing as true, or required it as a Duty? And in this Case, it would be most absurd and preposterous to urge the Authority of God for it, because this is the very Point in Question, whether God has revealed the Thing as a Truth, or commanded it as a Duty or not; and no Authority either divine or human can prove itself. And it is very plain, that Truth is in its own Nature, and the Reason of Things, prior to all Authority; and therefore cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it. Now it is certain, that immediate Inspiration or Revelation cannot be the Object of our Senses, since *no Man has seen God at any Time, or heard his Voice*; and it is allowed not to be a Matter of Science, or communicable by any natural Relation and

rational Connexion of Ideas, as this would make it a Part of natural Religion, and therefore it cannot be known or communicated at all, but by a personal Inspiration, or supernatural Illumination, which these Gentlemen, at least some of them, would not pretend to; tho' nothing less than this, and the clear rational Proof of it, can serve their Purpose. The Certainty and Communicability of immediate Inspiration, or Revelation, above Reason, could never have been thought of, or found out, but by great *Necessity* which is the Mother of *Invention*. But the Scriptures I am sure teach no such Things, and therefore they who have contrived this new Spring and Fountain of *communicable Truth*, must take the Honour of it to themselves as an Invention of their own.

Human Reason in Matters of Religion had been very much corrupted, blinded, and perverted, in all the former Ages, by the several Sorts of Idolatry, Superstition, and false Religion, which had every where prevailed and been established and secured by the Force of Civil Laws. In this State of Things Men were unavoidably kept in Ignorance; they groped in Darkness, and were under a Sort of Vassalage to the Devil and their own Lusts. But tho' Reason had been thus corrupted and abused, yet Men had not lost the Faculty, and there wanted nothing but a right Method of teaching, in order to restore Mankind to the right Use of Reason in Matters of Religion, or the true Knowledge of God and themselves, as relating to their Duty and Happiness:

pinefs: I fay a right Method of teaching, and the Liberty of preaching, propagating, receiving, and profefling the true Religion, were the great Obftacles to it, and what kept the World in Darknefs for fo many Ages. Now the great and manifefit Design of the Chriftian Difpenfation, was to bring Men from this grofs Ignorance and Darknefs of Superftition, to the true Knowledge of God and themfelves, relating to their Duty and Happinefs; and as this was brought about by a peculiar and extraordinary Providence, by Perfons furnifhed with Wifdom and Knowledge, much fuperior to the ignorant ftupid World, and armed with Courage and Refolution enough to venture their Lives, and propagate the true Religion in Oppofition to all the Civil Powers and Laws then in Being: I fay, fuch a Revival and Propagation of the true Religion, or of Truth and Reafon in Matters of Religion, may properly enough be called a Revelation from God, or Manifeftation of Truth from him, who was certainly the Author and Director of fo great a Reformation in the World. But then, what is true in Nature and Reafon, as all Religion muft, cannot depend on any Authority; fince Truth is in its own Nature prior to all Authority, and without it no Authority can be proved.

Agreeably to this we always find our Saviour and the Apoftles appealing to the Underftandings and Reafon of Men for the Truth of their Doctrines; and it was this intrinsic Force and Energy of Truth upon the Underftandings and

Consciences of the People that was the great Proof to them of Christ's being a true Prophet, and that his Doctrines must certainly be divine. This is the one and only certain Mark and Criterion of divine Truth, or Truth concerning the Will of God relating to our Duty and Happiness; and there is no other Way of teaching and conveying it, in which we may not be liable to the grossest Error, Imposture, and Deception. Every Thing that is true at all, must be necessarily or contingently so, *i. e.* true in Reason, or true in Fact. They who place Religion upon the Foot of Authority, must do it upon the supposed certain Truth of this Proposition, *That the Biblical Historians were all immediately inspired, and consequently infallible.* But how well this is proved, or what Sort of Foundation it is for Religion, will appear farther in due Place. What has been said, may perhaps be sufficient to let this Author see what I understand by *Revelation* or *Truth* as coming from God, so far as it is communicable to us without an immediate Revelation to ourselves, concerning which he had affected to throw himself into great Doubts and Uncertainty about my Meaning. But I shall now follow him in his Reasonings as they lie.

Page 15. *He comes to the second Question, in which he undertakes to prove, That there may be such Proofs and Evidences given, that Persons professing to have received Doctrines and Laws from God for the Use of Mankind, were indeed sent and inspired by him, and did receive them by Revelation*

tion from him : *Such Proofs and Evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such Laws and Doctrines as of Divine Authority.* I hope this Author does not think I am arguing against Possibilities, for I can assure him that I never do that, but where there is Demonstration on one Side, which I presume cannot here be pretended to. What God may do is one thing, and what he has or does do, another : I granted, or supposed, that God may, if he thinks fit, reveal a Truth to the Mind, so as to rest it purely upon his own Authority, without discovering it as true by any natural or rational Connexion of its Ideas, even tho' the thing itself be a natural Truth, and capable of Demonstration. I supposed this, because I knew, or could prove, nothing to the contrary. But then I am sure this Author cannot prove that this really is or ever was so in Fact. The Author every where affects to confound *Revelation, divine Truth,* or Truth coming from God in general, with *immediate Inspiration,* or *supernatural Illumination* ; tho' he has no Mark, or Criterion, whereby to know or judge of this. We are very sure, that whoever has any Truth of vast Importance to Mankind to communicate, especially such as their eternal Happiness must depend on, must be *ipso facto* divinely commissioned, and under a necessary Obligation from God to publish and declare it, however he receiv'd or came by it, whether by the Strength and Superiority of his own natural Faculties, or by any more immediate

diate supernatural Illumination. Reason itself is a natural Revelation from God to Man, and the Revival or Recovery of lost or neglected Truth, in Matters of the highest Importance to Mankind, may be properly call'd a particular Revelation, or extraordinary Manifestation of divine Truth, without entring into any Question concerning the Manner of its Communication; of which we can know but very little, if any thing at all. But this we certainly know, that whatever is true in the Nature and Reason of Things, and necessary to our Happiness, is the undoubted Will of God concerning our Duty. But the Author thinks he has another certain Mark and Criterion of Truth as coming from God, and necessary to our Happiness; and that is divine Authority as proved by Miracles.

Now here I think nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare Power of working Miracles can be no Proof at all, either of the Truth of Doctrines, or any Authority or special Commission that the Persons have from God. The *Egyptian* Sorcerers, if the Account be true, wrought great Miracles; and they who could create a living Creature, and turn a Rod into a Serpent, might as well have made a World, raised the Dead, or done any thing else within the Compass of Power. It can signify nothing to say, that those Sorcerers only wrought false or counterfeit Miracles, but the Miracles wrought by *Moses* were true and real; since nothing appears from the Story itself, but that the Mi-

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racles were of the same kind, and equally true on both Sides. And tho' *Moses* wrought greater Miracles than they, this can only prove his greater Power or Skill, and that the Magicians were fairly out-done in their own Way. But it can no more prove any Commission or divine Authority of *Moses*, than if he had conquered them by Force of Arms, which the People would equally have ascribed to the immediate Hand and Power of God on their Side, as they commonly did whenever they gain'd any great Advantage, either by Force or Fraud. Had *Moses* himself conquered the *Egyptians* by Force of Arms, this must have been looked upon as very extraordinary, miraculous, and supernatural, tho' it could not have proved the Truth or Justice of the Conqueror's Cause. He might have been assisted by some supernatural evil Power, since his Miracles were commonly wrought not for the Good but Destruction of Mankind, and this out of a particular Partiality in Favour of one Nation, who pretended to be the peculiar chosen People of God, while they were always the very worst and wickedest Part of the World. Even under the Blaze of all these Miracles, and most astonishing Displays of divine Power, the stupid Herd had no sooner pass'd the Red-sea, and gone a little Way into the Wilderness, but they made a Calf, and ascribed their Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*; from whence one must conclude them more brutish than their Cattle, and not endued with any common Sense or human Faculties.

culties. This was the great Advantage of such an extraordinary Conduct towards them, and if one should take those *Hebrew* Historians in a literal Sense, and out of the Allegory, there was scarce any such thing as common Providence in that Nation, for above a thousand Years together; but every thing which happened to them, came about in a miraculous and supernatural Way.

The *Hebrew* Historians every where discover a visible and strong Prejudice and Prepossession in Favour of their Nation, whom they continually represent as God's peculiar and most beloved People, his Chosen, his Inheritance, Portion, and Delight. But that these high Pretensions were all owing to their Pride, Vanity, and Superstition, is sufficiently prov'd from their own History which they give us themselves.

When they undertook the Conquest of *Canaan*, they pretended a Commission from God to put all the Inhabitants, Men, Women, and Children, to the Sword, and possess themselves of the whole Country; and this they said God had promised and secured to them 400 Years before, in the Days of *Abraham*, and that this was the exact Time of its Accomplishment: But this soon appeared to have been a Forgery, and false in Fact; for had God ever engaged himself to any such thing, as to give them the quiet, peaceable Possession of the whole Land, at the End of 400 Years, no doubt but he would have made it good, and enabled them to put their divine Commission in Execution, which

which he did not do. They possess'd themselves indeed of a great many Cities and Towns upon the Mountains, and put all to the Sword so far as they prevail'd; but they could not drive them out of the Vallies, because they had Chariots of Iron, that is, they were furnished with Horfe, which the *Israelite* Infantry, notwithstanding their divine Commission, could not stand before. This Conquest, so far as they carried it over the mountainous Parts of the Country, was the most bloody, cruel, and outrageous, that ever had been known, and beyond all Example till this Time. Had it been an armed Enemy in the Field, and in a prior State of War with them, they must have had a Right, by the Law of Nature and Nations, to Mercy and Quarter upon their Submission. But to put Women and Children to the Sword, without any Provocation, who had never injured them, and who were quietly and peaceably enjoying their own, in order to enter upon their Possessions and Properties, and to plead a divine Commission and Authority from God for all this, seems to be the highest Complication of Outrage, bloody Cruelty, Superstition, and Profanation of the holy Name and awful Authority of God, that human Nature is capable of. I am sure they who believe these things to have been done by an immediate Commission and Authority from God, ought to have nothing less than Demonstration for it, and not trust to the distant Reports of the most prejudiced and superstitious Historians, such as
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these *Hebrew* Writers plainly appear to be. It is true indeed, that by supposing a Revelation above Reason, and contrary to Humanity, a Man may justify this Conduct of the *Israelites*, or any other Wickedness in the World: But if such Commission and divine Authority should not be granted; I doubt our Author would never be able to prove it.

This Author grounds the whole of *Revealed Religion* upon the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of divine Authority, abstracted from, or independent of any Reason or Fitness of Things; as appearing to the Understanding by a rational Connexion of Ideas. This is plainly the Author's grand Principle, and what he has made himself accountable for; or otherwise he would not contradict me. But before I come directly to the Business of Miracles, I shall here take leave to make a few general Observations, which I intend not as mere *Postulata* or Things granted, but as so many previous *Lemmata* to be afterwards farther applied.

I. Then; We have no certain Test or Rule of Judgment, whereby to distinguish between a true Miracle and a false, or between a Thing of this Nature that is really done, or done only in Appearance. The Senses themselves are liable to Deception, and in Cases of this Kind we have the more Reason to suspect them; and therefore ought to be the more upon our Guard against being deceived and imposed on. The innumerable Stories of supernatural Facts which have been generally received and believed, as
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strongly attested by great Numbers of credible Eye and Ear-witnesses, and yet afterwards appeared ill grounded, and to have been owing to Imposture, Ignorance, or Credulity, is a sufficient Ground for Caution and Suspense about such Matters. And Men are the more easily imposed on in such Matters, as they love to gratify the Passion of *Admiration*, and take a great deal of Pleasure in hearing or telling of Wonders. But,

2. We have no Test or Rule of human Judgment whereby to know what is or is not a Miracle, supposing the Thing to be really done, and that there is no Deception in the Case with regard to the Fact itself. Because we know not the utmost Power of natural Agents, or how far even the most common Causes may sometimes concur unobserved by us, which may make a Thing look extraordinary when there is nothing uncommon in it. And from hence, how extraordinary and supernatural soever a Thing may appear, and tho' the Fact be certainly true and obvious to the Sense, yet we can scarce ever pronounce with any Certainty, concerning a peculiar divine Agency, or immediate and occasional divine Interposition.

3. Where the Facts are not the immediate Objects of Sense, but depend upon Testimony, this Testimony, being human, must be always fallible. And in this Case the Probability will be still less at a greater Distance from the Fountain, or first original Evidences; or as it comes through more Hands, and in a longer Succession
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of Time. For in this Case there must be always some Danger of Alterations in the Conveyance, and a few Circumstances in a Story either left out or added, might make the most common Thing in the World look extraordinary and miraculous.

4. As human Testimony must be always fallible, so with regard to Miracles, Prodigies, Ghosts, Apparitions, and Things in themselves improbable, it has the very least and lowest Degree of *Credibility*. The same Testimony and Attestation which would be easily taken for a common natural Fact, would not be soon admitted for an extraordinary and miraculous one, where there must be always more Danger and Probability of Deception. And therefore the Evidence or Proof in this Case ought to be so much the stronger and uncontestable, in Proportion to the natural Improbability or Incredibility of the Thing. Every the least Circumstance or Possibility of Error or Deception in such a Case ought to be narrowly sifted, and strictly examined; as Men would do in a like Case, if any great temporal Interest depended on it. Such Sort of Facts therefore have the lowest Degree of Probability, next to those which are absolutely incredible and incapable of Proof upon any Testimony at all, as being false and contradictory in their own Nature.

5. It is highly improbable, and cannot be admitted, that God should work Miracles, or interpose by an immediate divine Power, out of the Way of natural Agency and common Providence,

vidence, but to answer some great End of vast Importance to Mankind. And therefore he would not work Miracles either to prove Things which were plainly and necessarily true in Nature and Reason before, nor Things in their own Nature indifferent, and such as can serve to no good Use or Purpose at all, when they are known and put in Practice.

The great important End and Design of Christ's Miracles, was plainly to procure him a sufficient Degree of Attention and Regard from the People, and to prove, from the beneficent Effects of them, that he was no Impostor or false Prophet, but a Favourite of God and a Friend to Mankind. And had not this been proved, they would never have hearkened to him at all, and he could never have taught or instructed them in the most plain and necessary Truths of Nature and Reason. But when he had thus procured a due Attention and Regard to his Doctrines, they carried their own Conviction with them, and by their native Light and Energy forced their own Way to the Hearts and Consciences of Men. Suppose a Man should design some great Good to another, who is so much prejudiced against him, that he will not attend to, or regard him, and cannot believe him to be his Friend: In this Case it is impossible the Person should receive the Benefit intended him in a Way of rational Choice and Acceptance, without first conquering his Prejudice, and bringing him to a Temper and Disposition to hear and hearken to his Friend.

This I take to be exactly a parallel Case. Jesus Christ appeared, and came into the World for the vast Advantage of Mankind. He was to bring them out of the Darkneſs of Idolatry, Superſtition, and falſe Religion, into the clear Light of Reaſon and true Religion. Yet the People were not only blind and irrational, but deſperately perverſe and obſtinate in their Superſtition; and could not imagine that any new Prophet could teach them better than they had been taught before. They had heard of nothing but Miracles, and had been ſettled in nothing but what had been confirmed and proved by Miracles; and therefore it was abſolutely neceſſary to work more and greater Miracles, and ſuch as might have a more viſible Tendency to the Good of Mankind than any that had been wrought before. And without this, it would have been impoſſible to have gained any Regard or Attention at all to the moſt obvious Truths from ſo ſtupid a Generation, who had never taken any divine Truth upon its proper genuine Evidence before. But then this Point being gained, and Attention procured, the Conviction came in another Way, and Religion was put upon a quite different Foundation. It was the native intrinsic Evidence of eternal immutable divine Truth, that convinced the Underſtandings, and made its own Way to the Hearts and Conſciences of Men. And tho' the Miracles might be neceſſary to make Way for this and procure Attention, they could be no proper Evidence, or additional Proof of it.

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The great Question then was, Whether Jesus was a true Prophet, or an Impostor and Deceiver, or whether he wrought his Miracles by a divine or diabolical Power? And the Scribes, Pharisees, and unbelieving *Jews* asserted the latter. But how was this answered and retorted? Was it by maintaining that none but a true Prophet could work Miracles, or exert any such Power? Not at all, but the quite contrary. *If I by Belzebub cast out Devils, by whom do your own Sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your Judges.* This was an Argument *ad hominem*. They could not say that their *own Sons*, or their own Party, cast out Devils by a diabolical Power, or by a Confederacy with the Devil. And yet it seems they did cast them out, by some Means, and to some Ends and Purposes or other; which was doubtless to support their own Superstition, or to maintain their usurped Dominion over the Understandings and Consciences of Men, by the specious and plausible Pretence of Miracles, as a Proof of divine Authority. But our Saviour lays the great Stress of the Argument, not upon the extraordinary Nature of the Power exerted or Things done, but upon the Ends and Purposes for which such Power is employed, and to which it is directed. And he insists upon it that his Miracles were all exerted for the Good of Mankind, not only for their outward temporal Good, but to enlighten their Understandings, bring them to the true Knowledge of God and themselves, and to promote Truth, Peace, and Righteous-

ness in the World. And this not upon the Foot of mere Authority and blind Submission, but upon the Principles of eternal immutable Truth and Reason. If we leave this out, the Nature and Reason of Things, as appearing to the Understanding in a *rational Connexion of Ideas*, the Plea of the Scribes and Pharisees, as to any Argument from Miracles, must have been as good as Christ's own Plea, and have gone as far.

But farther, that wicked Men may work Miracles, and even such as in their outward temporal Effects are for the Good of Mankind, is very plain from what Christ himself assures us, that in the last Day many such shall come and plead with him, that *in his Name they have preached and prophesied, cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works*; whom yet he will reject and disown as *Workers of Iniquity*. And from hence it is evident, that neither the Power of working Miracles, nor the external temporal Effects of it for the Good of others, can so much as prove a good Man, and much less a true Prophet, without the *moral Character*, consistent throughout in a regular uniform Life and Conversation, exemplifying and recommending real Virtue and true Goodness. But this would be appealing to human Observation and Reason, and resting the whole Argument upon a *rational Connexion of Ideas in the Understanding*, which the Patrons of Miracles, as the Proof of divine Authority, abstracted from the Nature and Reason of Things, as appearing

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ing to the Understanding, ought to take care of and avoid.

But it is farther evident, That neither the Power of working Miracles, nor the strongest Faith in it had any Connexion at all with that *Faith* which denominated Men *faithful*, and recommended them to the Favour of God. Multitudes who believed in Christ as a true Prophet, and who received the Benefit of their *Faith of Healing*, as to the Cure of their Diseases, were yet most faithless wicked Wretches, and knew nothing of that Faith and Righteousness by which they must be saved. There were vast Numbers that followed Christ only for the Loaves and Fishes, or from the Hopes of some bodily Cures, whose Faith only wrought by the Force and Power of Imagination, and must have had the same Effects, whether it had been well or ill grounded. This Faith or Healing was indispensably necessary, and nothing else was necessary to the Cure, whether the Person healed was morally a good or a bad Man. *Dost thou believe? If thou believest thou mayest be healed, thy Faith hath made thee whole, and be it unto thee according to thy Faith*, was the constant Language and indispensable Condition of those miraculous Cures. And yet when there were ten Lepers healed at once, there was but one who returned to give Glory to God. And this one was a *Stranger*; but the other nine were *true Jews*, their Turn had been served, and they cared for no more. This necessary prerequisite, Faith, was purely natural, and de-

pended on Mens different Tempers and Dispositions, and could not be given or communicated; for otherwise it cannot be doubted, but so great and true a Lover of Mankind as Christ was, he would have given it to his own Brethren, and to his Neighbours the *Gallileans*, among whom he could work but few or no Miracles, *because of their Unbelief*; but this great Prophet had no Honour in his own Country, neither did his own Brethren believe on him. One would think, had the Miracles been intended as a Test of Truth, or capable of producing any true saving Faith, that they ought to have been wrought chiefly upon Unbelievers, as the most effectual Means of their Conviction and Conversion; but it is plain that the Case was quite otherwise.

But after all, there was something peculiar to the *Jews* in this magisterial authoritative Way of teaching; they had no Notion of any eternal immutable Law of Nature, or Rule of Righteousness, which must be always the Will and Law of God to Mankind. They had Understandings, but little superior to the Beasts; they were always a grossly ignorant, and superstitious People, and their Pride and Superstition had separated them from the rest of the World; they knew nothing of human Nature, or of Mankind, and from hence *Moses* and the Prophets were forced to deal with them as School-Boys, or Children in their Non-age, and under the first Rudiments of Instruction; they received even the Moral Law from *Moses* as a Matter
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of particular positive Institution, and not as true or reasonable in itself; and as they received and submitted to it, only upon this Foot of blind Obedience to Authority, and slavish Fear of Punishment, they were as much disposed upon the same Principle to receive *Falseness* as *Truth*, or to do *Evil* as *Good*; for they were to receive and submit to every Thing, whether in Doctrine or Practice, upon the same Foot of *Authority*, supported by *Miracles*, of which *Miracles*, they themselves were to be the only Judges; though they were under a natural Incapacity of judging right about it; every Thing was a Miracle with such a stupid People, that they did not understand, or could not account for, and that was really nothing at all. And from hence we see, That they went out of *Egypt* through the *Red-Sea*, received a Law at Mount *Sinai* which they never obeyed, travelled up and down in the Wilderness forty Years, without any human Means of Subsistence, and without ever wearing out or changing their Clothes from Infants to grown Men and Women; then at last they conquered Part of the Land of *Canaan*, by murdering the Inhabitants and lawful Possessors, and lived together after this for many hundred Years, continually drenched with Blood, either by their Wars with the Nations round about them, or by intestine Broils and Divisions among themselves; in which they cut the Throats, and ript up the Bowels of one another from Time to Time, and were at last utterly destroyed and rooted

out as a Nation or Body-Politick, and made a By-word, Scorn, and Reproach, to all Nations, without the least Hope or Expectation of a Restoration, from any Reason or human Appearance of Probability after a Desertion and total Dispersion of above sixteen hundred Years; and all this in a miraculous Way, and as a Proof of divine Authority, and God's special Favour to his chosen People. But by all this, I think, God has sufficiently shewn in the Course of his Providence, the Nature and Consequences of *Enthusiasm*, and how far the Pretence of *Miracles* to support a *divine Authority*, that must not be farther reasoned upon by any prior Principles, can be a proper Foundation for *true Religion*. Sure I am, that such a Principle may serve to support any Scheme of Imposture, Superstition, and false Religion, but can be of no Service at all to Truth of any Sort.

It is true that *Christ* himself, whose Ministry was confined entirely to the Jews, applies to them pretty much in this Way of Authority, as they were capable of being taught and instructed in no other way, and in this Method of teaching like Children and Minors, *Moses* and the Prophets had always trained them up. They would never receive any Truth or Duty from the clearest Reason and Fitness of Things, till God himself had pronounced it from the Mouth of a Prophet. No doubt but the Unity of God is as clearly and demonstrably founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, as any thing can be; and yet this stupid
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People could never have believed it, if God himself had not declared it in a visible, sensible Manner, that they might have his own Word for it. And tho' our Saviour was forced to take them in their own Way, yet his Doctrines were of such a Nature, as to carry with them a Degree of Light, Evidence, and Conviction, vastly superior to any sensible Manifestation of Authority whatever; and therefore when they came to feel the irresistible Force and Energy of divine Truth upon their Understandings and Consciences, they cry'd out, that this Man taught them like *one in Authority*, and not like the Scribes and Pharisees. He taught them not as a Ruler, or Man in Power that could punish their Disobedience in a legal Way, as their other Doctors did, but with the Authority of a Prophet, or Teacher sent from God, by the clear irresistible Evidence and Conviction of Truth. And this was certainly a *divine* Method of teaching, and the only Way to enlighten the Understanding, and purify the Heart and Affections, by bringing Men to the right Use of Reason, and applying Truth to their Consciences; which no legal Exercise of Authority, or any mere external visible Manifestations of Power, could have done. This latter had been the Method by which this blind, obstinate, and incorrigible Generation had been always governed; they had been kept under the Terror and Lash of penal Laws, and often frightened with the prophetic Denunciations of terrible temporal Vengeance, and Judgments
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from God. But their Understandings had never been truly enlightened, nor their Hearts and Affections ever been apply'd to by the Light and Conviction of Truth in a right Way; and accordingly such a Dispensation had a suitable Effect upon them, and such as must naturally be expected; their Obedience was only the Submission of Slaves, their Virtue nothing but a Restraint upon outward Actions, and their Repentance like that of a Thief or Murderer at the Gallows. But the Christian Dispensation is of another and higher Kind; it consists not in the Exercise of coercive Authority, nor in any external visible and sensible Manifestation of *mere Power*, but in the internal Manifestation of *Truth* to the *Understanding*; in *clear Light*, *free Choice*, and *rational Obedience*.

And accordingly when *St Paul* comes to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, we hear but very little of any Miracles wrought among them; he had a Gospel to preach, and Doctrines to be delivered to them, that must make their own Way, and force Conviction as soon as they came to be duly considered. He does not Send them to *Moses* and the Prophets for Conviction, or come to them with a Hear, O ye Rebels! Thus saith the Lord; or, this is the positive express Voice of God himself to you; but he appeals to the Law written in their Hearts, and with clear and solid Reason urges them with the native Force and Energy of *Moral Truth*. Had this Apostle thought the *Jewish Law* and Oeconomy to have any necessary or useful

useful Connexion with Christianity, he must have first instructed the *Gentiles* in it before he could have made them Christians; but he was so far from this, that he never once mentions *Moses* and the Prophets, or draws any Consequences from them, but to the *Jews* themselves, who could admit of no other Authority; and where this Apostle meets with any of the *Jewish* Faction among the *Gentiles*, who would have placed Christianity upon the Foot of *Moses* and the Prophets, he makes it his chief Business to bring the *Gentiles* off from it, as a Constitution and State of Thing, which never had, nor ever could answer the Ends and Purposes of *true Religion*. And it is very plain, that this Attempt to connect Christianity with Judaism, proved the greatest Obstacle to the Propagation of St *Paul's* Gospel, or true Christianity, among the *Gentiles*; and the Patrons of it, the judaizing Preachers and Teachers were the Apostle's bitterest Enemies, and the Authors of all his Troubles.

I have here premised thus much to shorten the Work, and to save the Reader's Time and Patience, since I shall have little else to do, but to apply these preliminary Propositions and Principles to the Author's particular Exceptions and Evasions, as I go along with him, and attend him from one Thing to another; for I cannot see that he has offered any Thing new, or done any Thing but declaim upon the common Topics and systematical Hypotheses of *School-Divinity*; which is no extraordinary Thing,

Thing, and nothing but what any other *Preacher* might have done as well as he.

This Author's whole Book, as to the argumentative Part of it, may be reduced to this one Syllogism, *Whatever God has commanded must be reasonable and fit, and ought consequently to be done, on the sole Foot of his Authority, abstracted from any prior Reason, or Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding:*

But God has commanded some Things purely indifferent in their own Nature, so far as we can see, and other Things which must appear unreasonable to our weak Understandings, abstracted from such immediate divine Authority:

Therefore Things indifferent in themselves, or which might otherwise appear unreasonable and unfit to mere human Reason, may be reasonable, fit and necessary by divine Authority.

Now I have denied the minor Proposition in this Argument, excepting in the Case of *immediate personal Inspiration*, which this Author thinks to be denying *all Revelation or Truth from God*. The Question here is not whether God may not reveal or discover Truth to the Mind in a Way superior to what is common and natural, for this I have granted: Nor is the Question, whether all Truth is not from God, as the only true original Fountain and Conveyer of it; for this the Author has never denied, and I suppose never will. Nor, *lastly*, is the Question, Whether God may not communicate and convey *spiritual and divine Truth*, or Truth relating to the Will of God, concern-
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ing our Duty and Happiness to the Understanding of Men, either mediately or immediately, as he thinks fit: He may give spiritual Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding, to some Men in a Degree vastly superior to others, by the superior Strength and Extent of their own natural Faculties, or by occasional Illuminations as he may think fit. Nothing of this, I presume, can be any Part of the Controversy between the Author and me; but the only Question is concerning the principal Characteristic, or Medium of Proof, by which we are to perceive and judge of *divine Truth*, or of Truth *as coming from God*. And here the Author seems to think, that human Testimony and Authority, weak and fallible as it is, is yet both sufficient, and the only Means of conveying such Truth to us, who cannot pretend to any immediate personal Inspiration, or Revelation, in the Case. But it is certain, that *divine AUTHORITY*, as founded upon *human Authority*, must be liable to all the Weakness, Uncertainty, Failures, and Imperfections of such *human Authority*. Since the Superstructure can never be stronger than the Foundation, nor the Conclusion clearer than the Principles from which it is drawn; and therefore I should not care to trust my Soul with a Man who would place *Religion*, and *eternal Salvation*, upon such a Bottom. And if the Author is not here disputing about Religion, as the necessary Means of *Salvation*, he can be only
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acting the Part of a *weak Enthusiast*, or *artful Impostor*.

According to him, *Truth*, tho' ever so clearly and demonstrably connected with our *Duty* and *Happiness*, cannot be *divine Truth*, or a Revelation from God, unless it comes in the Way of *positive Authority*, abstracted from the Reason or Fitness of Things, and confirmed by *Miracles*. I take this to be the Controversy between us; but I shall give it in his own Words, from *Page 15*, where he states the Question, and opens the Debate as follows.

“ This leads me to the second Question
 “ that was proposed to be considered ; with
 “ regard to which I lay down this Proposition :
 “ That there may be such Proofs and
 “ Evidences given, that the Persons professing
 “ to have received Doctrines and Laws from
 “ God for the Use of Mankind, were indeed
 “ sent and inspired by him, and did receive
 “ them by Revelation from him : Such Proofs
 “ and Evidences as make it reasonable for those
 “ to whom they are made known, to receive
 “ such Laws and Doctrines as of divine Authority ;
 “ in which Case, to refuse to receive
 “ those Doctrines, and to submit to those Laws,
 “ would be a very criminal Conduct, and a
 “ manifest Breach of the Duty which such
 “ reasonable Creatures owe to the Supreme
 “ Being. This is the proper Question in Debate.
 “ For tho' this Writer pretends not to
 “ deny, that the Persons to whom the original
 “ Revelation

“ Revelation is immediately made, may be
 “ certain, that they themselves received it by
 “ immediate Revelation from God himself ;
 “ yet he denies that they have any Way of
 “ proving to others that it is a Revelation from
 “ God, except by proving the Reasonableness of
 “ the thing itself ; which is to say, that they
 “ have no Way of proving to others, that it
 “ came by divine Revelation at all : For as I
 “ have already observed, the Reasonableness of
 “ a Doctrine or Law will never alone prove,
 “ that the Man who teacheth that Doctrine,
 “ or bringeth that Law, had it by *immediate*
 “ *Revelation* from God. This must be prov’d,
 “ if it be prov’d at all by other Evidence. It
 “ will be easily granted, that Persons being
 “ perswaded that they have received any thing
 “ from God by *immediate Revelation*, is not in
 “ itself a sufficient Reason to others, to engage
 “ them to receive it as such ; and if we had
 “ only their own Word for it, without any o-
 “ ther Proof, we could not take this for a pro-
 “ per Evidence, without laying ourselves open
 “ to the Delusions of Enthusiasm and Impos-
 “ ture. The Question then is, Whether, ab-
 “ stracting from the Credit and Testimony of
 “ the Persons themselves to whom the original
 “ Revelation is made, there may not be Proofs
 “ and Evidences given, sufficient to convince
 “ others, that they were indeed sent of God ;
 “ and that what they publish from God, and in
 “ his Name, is indeed a Revelation from him.”

I cannot

I cannot say but the Author has here stated the Question fairly enough ; for what he undertakes to prove, as every one must see, is, the Truth and Certainty of a *divine Revelation* upon the Evidence of *Miracles*, abstracted from the Nature, Reason, or Fitness, of Things ; and if he could get rid of this Business, as easily as he has undertaken it, he would be indeed a great Man. But this is the Point to be debated, and in which I shall give him fair Play without Favour.

In the first Place then, it may be observed, that this Gentleman builds his whole Proof upon a *Petitio Principii*. He every where takes the miraculous Facts, with regard to *Moses* as well as *Christ*, as granted, or indisputably prov'd, when yet he could not but know the contrary. But if you should pretend to deny, or even to doubt of, any of the Facts, tho' it should be the most suspicious and obnoxious of them, which the *Hebrew* Historians have recorded of *Moses*, this Author would immediately cry out Murder, and call you *Atheist*, *Deist*, *Free-thinker*, *Infidel*, or any thing that is worse than a *Turk* or a *Jew* ; so dangerous is it to provoke Men of his *Authority*. But to oblige him, and give him all possible Advantage in the Argument, I shall suppose with him the certain indubitable Truth of the Facts themselves, and yet must deny the Use he has made of it, and all the Consequences he has drawn from it, as utterly precarious, unnaturally strained, and forced into his Service, without Reason or
Consent.

Consent. As he has set aside all Considerations drawn from the Nature, Reason, and Fitness, of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, he can have no farther or higher Medium of Proof for any thing, as true, rational, or divine: For how would he prove, that Christ himself and the Apostles were not Impostors, but from the intrinsic Excellency of their Doctrines, as recommending themselves to the Reason and Consciences of Men, and from their great Usefulness and Advantage to Mankind, as most agreeable to the Natural and Moral Necessities of Man, and the Natural and Moral Perfections of God?

Nothing, I think, can be plainer than this, that the bare Exertion of Power, of what Nature or Kind soever, can have no Connexion with Truth or Goodness; but the Ends and Purposes to which that Power is employed and directed, whether ordinary or extraordinary, natural or supernatural, must denominate the Person as good or bad, a Friend or Enemy to Mankind, as the Tree is known by its Fruits. And any other Rule of Judgment concerning the Exercise of Power, whether natural or supernatural, we have not, and cannot have.

This learned Author ought to have given us some certain Notion or Idea, or other, of a Miracle, at least as the Matter stands in his Apprehensions. If that must be a Miracle which rarely happens, and for which we can assign no natural common Cause, that will be a Miracle to one Man that is not so to another;

and in this Way the more a Man knows of natural Causes, and of Circumstances and Incidents in which they must operate in an unusual Manner, the fewer Miracles he will believe, and the less Weight any such Evidence will have with him. But if Things of this Nature are then only *Miracles*, when they are wrought for the Confirmation of *Truth*, and to discountenance and set aside *Imposture* and *Error*, we must have some Notion of *Truth* antecedent to the Miracle, and by which we are to judge of the Miracle itself, and not of Truth by the Miracle, as this Author supposes. If we would say, that those are true Miracles, and are done by a divine Power, which are wrought for the Confirmation of Truth; and false Miracles, or diabolical Delusions, which are done to support Superstition and Error, this might be right enough; but then the Author's Order must be inverted, and we must judge of Miracles by Truth, and not of Truth by Miracles. And tho' this is doubtless the best and most natural Way of judging, yet it will not serve any Scheme, or System of *Superstition* or *Imposture*.

This Author can easily grant, that *Mens Words* are not to be taken as to any internal immediate Revelation to themselves, of which they may be certain; and why then is their Word to be taken for Miracles, or the external supernatural Causes of things, in which they are more liable to be mistaken? He seems to see the Absurdity of placing Truth upon human fallible Authority; and

and yet his Scheme necessarily leads him to place the most *important* or *divine Truth* upon this very same Foot of human fallible Authority. But surely he ought to be more consistent with himself. Had this Author been a fair Reasoner, and aimed at nothing but *Truth*, he would have undertaken the direct Proof of his main Principle which he every where tacitly supposes, namely, the Infallibility of the Biblical Historians as prov'd by the Miracles, or that they could not err in any thing they delivered. But he knew very well, that the Miracles could not prove this, and yet was not likely to own it without unmasking himself, and letting the Reader into the whole Mystery of the Argument, in which he is so good a *Master of Arts*. For this Author never urges any Argument, but by supposing the Truth of the Fact, and supposing the Infallibility of the Historians considered as such; that is, by supposing every thing which he ought to have proved and could not prove. And this Way of supposing is the Scholastic Method of Demonstration, in the Art of *School-Divinity*.

But this Author's whole Discourse upon Miracles in his first Chapter, is entirely oratorical and declamatory, without any thing of Argument in it. He supposes the Miracles wrought by *Christ* and the Apostles, to be intended as the proper Proof and Evidence of the Doctrines. He rejects the internal rational Evidence of the Doctrines to the Understanding, and places the Proof of *Christianity* as a *Revelation* from God, upon

bare external, visible Acts of Power, which in their own Nature have no Connexion with Truth or Righteousness. But as I have sufficiently confuted this weak *systematical* Ground of Truth, and shewn it to be the true and natural Foundation of all Superstition and Imposture; I may now trust the Reader with the Author's Harangues upon it, without following him any farther in such a *Wild-Goose Chase*.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

Natural and Reveal'd Religion not essentially different, but in regard to their Subject-Matter one and the same. Covenant of Peculiarity with the Jews, a vain Pretence and national Delusion. The Abrahamic Covenant of Righteousness not confin'd to that Nation, but extending to all Mankind. Mosaic Reformation from Idolatry very imperfect. The People worshipped God under false Notions and Images of a local, oracular, and tutelar Deity. Miracles of Moses no Proof of his divine Mission; they relate to no Attribute of God but Power, and carry with them plain Marks of Imposture.

THE Author in his second Chapter, enters upon an Answer to what had been urged against the Law of Moses as a *divine Institution*, or *immediate Revelation* from God; and here he premises several things concerning the intrinsic Goodness, natural Evidence, Wisdom, and rational Design of that Law, with regard to the *Moral Polity* of it, and with respect to the ritual or ceremonial Part of the Polity; he doubts not but if the Reason and Fitness of things, as arising from the particular Temper, Disposition, and other Circumstances of the People at that Time could be now known,

the ceremonial Part would appear as wise and reasonable as the moral Part of that Law. But this, with Submission, is entirely overthrowing and giving up the Argument of the last Chapter; for there, divine Authority, as proved by Miracles, was the only proper and genuine Evidence of divine Truth, or a Revelation from God. The prior rational Evidence to the Understanding, may make a thing reasonable and fit in itself, and consequently a Part of the Law of Nature and Reason. Some external, visible and extraordinary Acts of Power, supposed to be from God, is the only genuine Proof of a Revelation from God; and this being supposed, such Truth ought to be receiv'd and obey'd, whether it should appear rational and fit by any prior Evidence to the Understanding or not; nay should it appear ever so unreasonable or unfit to our weak Reason and Understandings, it must yet be received and submitted to upon the Foot of *divine Authority*. This Principle, tho' the Author seems willing to get rid of it; if he could do it fairly, he must be soon forced to take up with again, if he would vindicate the divine Authority of *Moses* in his own Way of immediate Revelation.

In the Way of *Spiritual Scholasticism*, or *School-Divinity*, there must be two absolutely, distinct, and essentially different *Religions*, or Rules and Principles of Judgment about *Religion*, one of which they would call *Natural* and the other *Reveal'd Religion*. This might
look

look like setting up *Imperium in Imperio*, or two different and independent Judicatures in the same Society, which the Politicians have generally thought impossible and impracticable. But our *School-Divines* will undoubtedly take off this Difficulty, and set the whole Matter in a clear Light by a little longer Patience and Attention. But in the mean while, I can only give my own Opinion, as thus: The true Eternal and Immutable Religion of God and Nature, consists in the *filial Love and Fear of God*, and the *brotherly Love of Mankind*, in the *Practice of all those moral Duties of Truth and Righteousness which result from it*, under a *fiducial Trust in, and Dependence on, God*, and the *constant Sense of his Power and Presence, in all our Actions, as the Rewarder of good and Punisher of bad Men*. This is the Religion founded in *Nature and Reason*, and which must be at all Times and every where the same. And some have thought, that as this Reason in Matters of Religion had been in a great measure lost and neglected, amidst the general Ignorance, Superstition, and Idolatry, of Mankind; it was the great Business and Design of Revelation to restore it, and to set Moral Truth and Reason in its true original Light, by bringing Men to the right Use of their Reason and Understandings in such Matters. This is my Way of thinking about it; but others, and particularly our Author, seem to think in a quite contrary Way: They take *Reveal'd Religion* not to be *Natural Religion* revived, but a perfectly different Religion,

ligion, depending upon very different Principles and Grounds of Proof; and Reveal'd Religion with them, is a new Set of Doctrines absolutely above and beyond the Investigation and Judgment of human Reason, and depending on certain external, visible, and extraordinary Facts, as Proofs and Manifestations of the Will of God above Reason. What these supernatural Doctrines are, or how this supernatural, external, and visible Proof, as superior to Reason, may be known and judged of, is a Matter not yet agreed upon, and I doubt never will. But this I take to be the Controversy between the learned Author and me, the Dispute is about rational and sensible *Religion*, or whether *Sense* or *Reason* are most to be regarded and depended on in Matters of Religion; and as the ingenious Author has very openly and honourably brought this to a fair Trial, I hope the Reader will have Patience enough to hear it out.

Our Author lays a very great Stress upon a popular Notion, which had generally prevail'd among the Jews, and in which their Prophets and Historians had greatly contributed to support, humour, and encourage, the Pride, Vanity, and Superstition, of the common People; namely, that this Nation, exclusive of any other, had been chosen, separated, and set apart, as God's peculiar People, to be intitled to special Favour and paternal Affection, not only in the Course of common Providence, but by the most extraordinary occasional Interpositions.

sitions. The Prophets, indeed, might have good Reason to be under a plain Necessity for this, considering the Blindness and Obduracy of the People they had to deal with ; who, being incapable of any thing rational, and abstract, as true and necessary in the Nature of Things themselves, could be governed and influenced only by working upon their gross carnal Imaginations, by things not only external and sensible, but extraordinary and supernatural too. And though some *Enthusiasts* may call this *Imposture*, yet where it was necessary for the good of a Nation, it must have been justifiable ; and it might easily be proved, that all the civilized Nations in the World, were at first brought under Government, and Discipline, and Regulation of Laws in the same Way. And indeed this People from first to last, could scarce ever be said to be civilized at all ; but notwithstanding the Goodness of their Moral Polity, were always a wild, fierce, ungovernable Mob. They might be well called a brutish Generation, and a People of no Understanding ; for with regard to any thing true and right in the Nature and Reason of Things, they had little more Knowledge than their Sheep and Cattle. Amidst all their Idolatry and moral Wickedness, in which they might have vied with any Nation upon Earth, they could never be persuaded that God would ever cast off his chosen People, or break his everlasting Covenant and Promises with them, made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. No, surely ; he could never forsake his *First-born*,

born, his only Son Israel, his Darling and Delight !

But how does it appear that this People were ever such peculiar Covenant-Servants to the Almighty, or that they were ever under any such special Relation of Adoption, or Sonship, as they pretended to ? I am sure, this cannot appear from any Part of their natural History, or State of the Nation from first to last, as their own Historians have given it in, and handed down to us. How then shall we know it, or by what Rule must we judge ? Must we take their own Word, or the proud superstitious Imaginations of their own People for it ? Or, will this learned Author undertake to prove, that there was nothing of Pride and Superstition on the one Hand, or of Art and human Policy on the other ? I shall make it plain, that he has proved nothing of this, and has said nothing to it, but what is merely presumptive, declamatory, and evasive.

But farther, as to the *Covenant of Peculiarity*, in which the *Jewish* Nation prided themselves, and which this Author has taken up with from them without proof, *St Paul* in a manner demonstratively sets it aside, and proves by clear and solid Arguments, such as might have convinced any Man but a *Jew*, that the *Covenant of Promise*, which God made with *Abraham*, had no peculiar Relation to *Abraham's natural Seed*, or to the *Jewish Nation*, but extended equally to all Mankind, or to all the sincere Worshippers of the one true
God

God, in all Nations, and at all Times, to the End of the World. Had the Author considered this, he need not have given himself so much Trouble to assign the Reasons for a Thing not true in Fact. This puts me in mind of a Story which I have somewhere read of, a Question which King *Charles* the Second put to some Members of the Royal Society, soon after he had founded and established that learned Body. The Question was this, How it should come about, that any Quantity of Fish weighed in Water, and swimming in it, should weigh nothing at all, or no more than the Water it self would weigh without the Fish ? This seemed a great Difficulty, and several learned Solutions were thought of, and given in to it, which only served to create Diversion ; till at length one of them, wiser than the rest, proposed that the Matter might be put to a Trial, whether it was true in Fact or no, and upon Trial it was found not to be true in Fact, and the Fish weighed just as much in the Water as out of it.

But the Author I presume saw, that the *Covenant of Promise*, which God had made with *Abraham*, and in him with all the *Faithful*, and all true Worshippers, would not do as to any *national Peculiarity* ; and therefore he chose to rest this upon the *Law of Moses*. But the Apostle had distinguished between the *Covenant* or the *Promise*, or *Covenant of Promise*, and the *Law* ; and proved that the *Covenant of Promise* which had been made four hundred

dred and thirty Years before, could have no Relation to, or Connexion with, the Law, as respecting a *particular Nation*. And this was very strong and unanswerable Reasoning against a People, who imagined themselves a peculiar *elect Nation*, upon the Principle of a *legal political Oeconomy*. It is plain, that the Law of *Moses*, taking in the whole of it, was not a justifying Scheme, and yet this was certainly the Religion of that Nation, and they never knew or pretended to any other; and therefore *St Paul* brings them back to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, as containing the only true justifying Faith and Righteousness, by which all Nations, and every Man, must be accepted and rewarded of God.

What this Author offers from his System and Common-Place-Book, concerning the vast Advantages of that Law and Oeconomy to other Nations, and keeping up the Knowledge and Worship of the one God in the World, is all mere Imagination; for it is certain, that no other Nation ever received the Worship of one God from this Nation; but they themselves were continually running into Idolatry, and worshipping from Time to Time the Gods of the several Nations that conquered them; And when Christianity came to be preached, Judaism proved the greatest Obstacle to it. The zealous Sticklers for this Law, were the Men who every where raised Disturbances and Persecutions against *St Paul* in his preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, and were the
true

true Authors of all his Troubles and Sufferings. And the Miracles of *Moses*, as supposed to have proved his Religion to be the *true Religion*, prevented and obstructed the Progress of Christianity, more than the Heathen Idolatry did; but God had never left himself without a standing and most glorious Witness, and Proof of his Being and Perfections to Mankind, infinitely superior to the Evidence of all those Miracles of *Moses*, supposing them to have been really wrought; and that not only before those purblind superstitious and egyptianiz'd People, but even the Sight of the whole World; which could only astonish and confound, but not possibly prove the Truth or Righteousness of such a Religion as that. The Moral Law could need no Proof from Miracles, as depending upon a much clearer and superior Proof before, and the Ceremonial Law was incapable of any Proof at all, as having any Thing of Religion in it. There might be good *human Policy* enough in it, and at that Time, and under those Circumstances, to indulge so blind and stupid a People in such Superstitions, and outward mystical Pageantry, as they had seen nothing else in *Egypt*, and could not be brought off from it all at once. But the making such a Law irreversibile and perpetual, as the eternal unalterable Will and Law of God, when Circumstances might so vastly alter, does not seem to have been good Policy, and no human Politician since has thought so.

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The Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians* indeed are said to have been unalterable, a Decree once made could not be revoked ; but then it might be superseded and set aside by a quite contrary Decree, which amounted to the same thing.

But after all, *Moses* does not seem to have quite cured this People of Idolatry, even supposing that they had kept his Law ; for though he confined all Worship and Obedience to one true God, yet he indulged the gross Vulgar, or Body of the People, in a Sort of Worship, not much unlike to that of the Heathen local and tutelar Gods. No doubt but *Moses* himself, and the Prophets after him, had just Notions enough of God, and of his spiritual divine Perfections ; but with the gross of the People, the God of *Israel* was a local tutelar God. He always resided with the Ark, he sat upon the Mercy-Seat between the Cherubims, with a luminous Glory about him, to be ready on all Occasions to be consulted by the People, and to give Answers with an audible Voice to such important Questions as might be put to him. And when the *Philistines* took the Ark, the general Terror and Consternation the People were under, can hardly be conceived or expressed. The *Glory was departed from Israel* ; the Enemy had robbed them of their God. The High-Priest himself fell down dead, astonished with this dreadful News, and his Daughter-in-law, the Wife of *Phineas*, died in Child-bed with two Sons, one of which

which to keep up the Memory of this fatal Time, she named *Ichabod*, the *Glory is departed*. But the *Philistines*, as it happened very providentially, did not like their new God, who had quite demolished *Dagon*, while he stayed in his House ; and therefore, they sent him back again, to the inexpressible Joy of the People, who had hereby recovered their God again, after they had in a Manner given him up as quite lost.

When *David* being settled in Peace, had purposed to build a House for *the Lord to dwell in*, that he might from henceforth have a more stately and comfortable Habitation, and not be hurried about so from Place to Place in a Tent ; the Prophet *Nathan* was sent to him to forbid it, and put a stop to his Proceedings. *Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an House for my Dwelling ? For I have dwelt in no House, since the time I brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt to this Day, but have walked in a Tent and Tabernacle. In all the Places wherein I have walked with all the Children of Israel, spake I one Word to all the Tribes of Israel, when I commanded their Judges to feed my People Israel ? Or, said I, Why build ye not me a House of Cedar Trees ?* After this, *David* is let know, that considering the poor, low, contemptible State from which he had been raised to the Kingdom, his Thoughts were too aspiring ; and that though God intended to have a better and more commodious House to dwell in, than ever he had had before,

fore, yet not *David* himself, but his Son *Solomon*, was to have the Honour of it, 2 *Sam.* vii. And whoever will observe the Language and Style of these Historians, all along, while they are accommodating themselves to the gross Notions and Superstitions of the common People, or ignorant Herd, must see that they speak of God, as a national, local, and tutelar Deity; under which Notion the Populace always conceived of him, and worshipped him: They worshipped the true God therefore, only in Name, while they had the same Conceptions of him, that the Heathens had of their national Idols, or false Gods. They could have no just Notions or Apprehensions of the infinite Perfections, universal Presence, and providential Government of God, as the common Father and Friend of Mankind; nor could they have born any such Representation of their peculiar Idol or national God, but would have stoned the Prophet, who should have come to them with any such Doctrine. This, I think, is a plain and just Account of the Matter; and may give us an Idea of the two different Senses of the Prophets, and most antient *Hebrew* Historians, and their different Ways of representing *God* and *Providence*; the one agreeable to the Nature and Reason of Things, and the other accommodated to the gross incurable Ignorance, Blindness, Obduracy, and inveterate Superstition of their own People. This I take to be the true Key of these Writings, and without which it is impossible, in my Opinion,

to understand them, or to reconcile them to any Thing of Truth or Reason.

But to come more directly to the Miracles of *Moses*: This Author thinks it a most astonishing Supposition, that *Moses* himself should at that very Time have appealed to the Senses of the People, for the Truth of Things which had *never been done*! He ought to have added, which had never been *really done*, nor done in *Appearance*, or the Opinion of the People; and then perhaps his wonder might have abated. Did not the *Egyptian* Sorcerers appeal to the Senses of the People for what they did; or does he think, that they could really do such Things by their Enchantments? He has no Reason from the Story it self, that the Magicians did not do what they are said to have done, as well as *Moses*; or that his Miracles were more real than theirs. *Moses* we know, was skilled in all the Wisdom and Learning of *Egypt*; and if he could out-do them in their own Way, and work greater Wonders by his magic Wand, than they could by theirs, there was no Harm in that; while he was delivering his own Nation, and the Justice of the Cause was put upon mere Acts of Skill or Power. But the great Mystery is, how *Moses* should persuade such a vast Body of People, that he had led them through the Red-Sea, with all their Wives, Children, Sheep, and Cattle, if it had not been so? It may well be presumed, that this People having been so long Slaves in *Egypt*, knew but little

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of the Situation of the Country, or of any Way out of *Egypt* into *Arabia*, and *Palestine*, between the *Mediterranean* and the *Red-Sea*; they might think that both Seas joined, that there was no Way out of the Land, but through the Sea; especially, as the *Arabian* Merchants to avoid Land-Carriage, had brought their Goods into *Egypt*, over the Sea. And this might be more easily credible, if they were conducted only by Night, or in a thick dark Fog, with only the confused Light of Fire and Smoak, which kept them always in a Cloud. Under such Circumstances, so ignorant and stupid a People, and so infinitely fond of Prodigies and special Favours, might be easily persuaded, that the dry Ground which they marched over, was the Bottom of the Sea, which God had cleared of all the Water, Rocks, and Quick-Sands, to make way for them, and for their Wives and Children, with all their Flocks and Herds, in one Night. At Mount *Sinai*, God is supposed to have delivered the Law in the Voice of Thunder, and spoke to *Moses* in this terrible Way, while the Mountain was all in Fire and Smoak. But this Voice of Thunder the People could not articulate, and would have known nothing of it, had not *Moses* writ it down, and delivered it to them in a Book, or engraven it on two Tables of Stone, as he had just received it from God himself. But that this People, as soon as they had got over the *Red-Sea*, and marched a little Way into the Wilderness,

derness, under the astonishing Light and Conviction of such Miracles and Demonstrations of divine Power, should make a Calf, and ascribe their Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt* is most surprizing, and would render either the Story of the Miracles, or of such more than brutish Stupidity, almost incredible. But there is another Miracle wrought soon after, which might seem as great and extraordinary, as dividing the *Red-Sea*, and that is *Moses* making Water to flow out of a Rock, by only striking it with his Rod, to satisfy this perfectly blind and stiff-necked People, when they were almost ready to perish with Thirst. But it looks as if this Miracle soon came to be suspected, and *Moses* had almost lost his Credit by it. This People had never seen any fresh Water Springs in *Egypt*, where they had received all their Supplies of Water from the *Nile* by Canals cut for that Purpose ; and therefore, seeing Water flow out of a Rock, must at first appear as wonderful to them, as drying up the Sea. But when this came to be known as a common Work of God and Nature, and that all fresh Water Springs and Rivers flowed out of the Rocks and Mountains, *Moses* was denied an Entrance into the Land of *Canaan* for such Arrogance and Presumption, though he was offered to take a View of the Country, from the Top of a high Mountain, where he died.

But I shall not pursue this Account of Things through all its minute Circumstances, or try how far it may be naturally accounted for, and how far not: And I shall only observe farther, that this Author, always good at Suppositions, and who continually supposes what he cannot prove, has here supposed a Thing which cannot be proved: And that is, that this Account was written by *Moses* himself, and was as firmly believed then as it was in After-Ages. It is well known to the Learned, that most or all the biblical Books have received great Alterations and Additions from Time to Time, by Revisers or Editors, who have lived at a great Distance from one another. The Book of *Nebemiah* brings down the Genealogy of the High-Priests to the Time of *Alexander* the Great, or as low as *Jaddua*, whom *Josephus* makes Contemporary with *Alexander*, and to have been then High-Priest. The two Books of *Chronicles*, and the Books of *Daniel* and *Esther* were evidently wrote long after the Captivity, and pretty low down in the *Persian* Empire. There are several Passages and whole Chapters in *Isaiab* that must have been writ after the *Babylonish* Captivity, as relating to the State and Circumstances of the People at that time. The Book of *Psalms* is plainly a Collection of Poems and Songs, which were composed by several Hands at great Distances of Time. The ninetieth *Psalms* has been always ascribed to *Moses*, and some of them were

were writ after the Captivity. The second Book of *Samuel* brings down the History above forty Years after the Death of that Prophet; and the ten last Chapters of the first Book relate Things that were done after the Death of *Samuel*. And it might as well be said, that the Books of *Kings* and *Judges* were wrote by those Kings and Judges themselves, as that any of the other historical Books were wrote by the Persons whose Names they bear, and whose Actions they have given an Account of. But it is plain, that most of those historical Books, which give an Account of the Lives, Actions, or Works, of such or such Persons, speak of them in the third Person, as any other Historian would. In the Book of *Genesis* itself, Chapter xxxvi, we have an exact List of all the Dukes and Kings of *Edom*, before there was any King in *Israel*; which, therefore, was wrote when there was a King in *Israel*, and consequently could not have been earlier than the Time of *Samuel* and *Saul*. And it is probable, that *Samuel* wrote the whole History of that Nation down to his own Time, and inserted it under their proper respective Lives, which had never been collected and digested before.

It does not appear, that *Moses* writ any thing himself, but the original Book of the Law, which was to be kept with the Ark, and never to be read by any but the Priest who was to officiate. The History of the Creation and Deluge, the first Division of

Mankind, and peopling the several Nations, and of the *Abrahamic* Family might have been written from Time to Time by several Hands before the Days of *Moses*, and never collected and digested as we have it now, till *Samuel's* Time. In short, that those Books were writ at that very Time, and by those very Persons, whose Names they bear, is a popular systematical Supposition, which this Author takes up and runs away with, though every learned Man must know the contrary.

But supposing all these Miracles to have been really wrought, I would only ask *cui bono*, for what good End or Purpose were they done? Why only to destroy one Nation, the *Egyptians*, to enable the *Israelites* to destroy another Nation the *Canaanites*, by putting them all to the Sword, Men, Women, and Children, without Mercy or Humanity, in order to take Possession of their Lands, and the Fruits of all their Labour and Industry; who were only quietly and peaceably enjoying their own, and had never done these *holy Butchers*, or *divine Conquerors*, the least Injury. Had these Miracles been intended to prove any thing at all, it must have been to prove the divine Authority and Commission of *Moses*, to undertake and execute all this. But that it did not prove, and *Moses* dying in the Mount, after he had kept the People almost starving for forty Years in the Wilderness, is a sufficient Proof that he had mistaken his Commission, as did all the Issues and Events of that bloody Conquest

Conquest afterwards. And was this an End worthy of such peculiar miraculous Exertions and Displays of Power, from the most wise and righteous Governor of the World, and the common Father and Friend of Mankind? Or is such a Story credible in itself, or possible in Nature? Such Accounts of Things must be looked upon by every Body, as the most incredible Fiction and Forgery that ever was invented, were it not for the Prejudice and strong Prepossession, contrary to all Reason and common Sense, that those Historians were infallible, and immediately inspired. But I am sure, that this miraculously stupid People were always inspired and prepossessed with the Spirit of the Devil. And it is both a Matter of Grief and Wonder, that they should be able thus to transfuse their Spirit and Faith into Christians.

Page 78, the Author takes Notice of a Concession of mine, That the *Abrahamic* Covenant was *conditional*; and I am in no doubt, but it was so with regard to the promised Land, and all its other Blessings. But because the Author seems to imagine, that this Concession has given him a great Advantage, and that I had hereby given up the Argument, I shall endeavour to adjust this Account with him.

God had promised *Abraham*, that, besides all spiritual Blessings to himself and Seed, he would give his Posterity, or the Nation to be derived from him, the quiet peaceable Pos-

session of that whole Country in which he was then a Sojourner, and continue them in such Possession throughout all their Generations. And that moreover he would make them a Blessing to all other Nations, and the Instruments of propagating the Knowledge and Worship of the true God through all the World; provided that they would retain his true Religion themselves, and continue in the pure Worship of the true God, and in the Practice of all Truth, Peace, and Righteousness, as *Abraham* himself had done; and that upon these Terms the Promise should be made good within four hundred Years, reckoning from the Birth of *Isaac*, which was the last Seal and Confirmation of the Promise. This was the *Abrahamic* Covenant, and Condition upon which God had promised them the Land of *Canaan*, as well as all the other more spiritual Blessings. But it is plain, that the Conditions of this Covenant had never been comply'd with, and that all Right and Claim from it had been forfeited long before the Days of *Moses*. The People had violated all the Terms of this Covenant, run into all the Idolatry and Superstition of *Egypt*, and in all their Manners, Customs, and very Temper and Constitutions, were perfectly egyptianized before *Moses* was born, and before they came to be enslaved. For *Moses* therefore, at that Time to trump up the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or pretend to any Right or Claim from thence, must have been without the least Ground or Foundation; and
besides,

besides, the Plan which *Moses* had laid, or the Method which he had concerted at that Time to make himself Master of the Country, was absolutely inconsistent with the Nature and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant. Had these People performed the Conditions of the Covenant, and God had made good his Promise to them, no doubt but he would have done it some Way or other in the Course of his Providence, in a Method of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness; and not by Falshood and Impostures, unnatural Cruelty and Violence, Murder, Blood, and Rapine, which was the Way that *Moses* had contrived and projected for it. Had God fulfilled the Promise in his own Way, or in the Way of Truth and Righteousness, he might have given them the Possession of the Land, by making them the Instruments of converting the *Canaanites*, and bringing them to the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, and by enlarging their Borders, had there been any occasion for it, without dispossessing others, or making any violent Outrage or Invasion upon natural Right or Property. Had *Abraham*, 'while he was a Sojourner there, intended to possess himself of the Country by force of Arms, he might easily have done it, as being superior to them in strength; and he needed not have purchased a small Plat of Ground from the Children of *Heth*, with his own Money, when the People offered it to him for nothing, or any Part of the Country which he had a mind to; there being then

Room

Room enough and to spare, for him and them too. Or had this Method of Conquest been thought of, while *Joseph* was Prime-Minister in *Egypt*, and had the whole Force of the Kingdom at his Command, and while these *Hebrews* were possessed of all the strong Holds and Magazines, and all the Places of Power and Profit in *Egypt*, they might easily have possessed themselves of *Canaan* before the *Canaanites* had settled there, and so vastly improved and cultivated the Country. But then they must have been at the pains of Cultivation, Tillage, and Buildings, themselves; and could not have acted the Part of such Russians in taking Possession by Force and Violence of other Peoples Property, Labour, and Lives.

This People while they remained Lords of *Egypt*, and held all the Castles, strong Holds, and chief Places of Power and Profit which had been put into their Hands, had no thought of removing; but at last when they had been driven to the utmost Extremity, some Way or other must be found out to bring them off, or they must have all perished and been cut to Pieces there. But when this was done by an extraordinary Providence, they had no House nor Home, but were about to make themselves a Captain in the Wilderness, to return to *Egypt* again, and resign all their Plunder, which *Moses* had much ado to divert them from; and after all, they had no other Way of gaining any Settlement or Subsistence, but by destroying and plundering
first

first the *Midianites*, a rich Nation of Merchants, among whom *Moses* had been suckoured and fostered forty Years; and then dispossessing the Inhabitants of the *Amorite* Mountains, and entering upon their Lands and Properties, against all the Laws of Nature and Nations. And that all this should be done in the Name of God, under a pretence of divine Authority, and by a pretended Claim from the *Abrahamic* Covenant of Righteousness, makes it still worse, and an Instance of Falshood, Imposture, and Contradiction, beyond all Example.

To my having said that this People could not have acted under a divine Commission, or by any Claim from God's Promise to *Abraham*, because they could only drive the Inhabitants out of the Mountains, but not out of the Valleys, where they had Chariots of Iron, and a sufficient Number of Horse: This Author wittily replies, the Reason why they did not drive them out of the Plains, as well as the Mountains, was because of their *Cowardice and Fear*, for otherwise *they might have driven them out if they would*. The Author may jest as long as he pleases, but most People will still believe that the Reason why they did not drive them out, was because they could not. And how should they when God, as the Author observes, had declared before, that he would not drive them out altogether, but only *by little and little*? But God had never declared this, till *Moses* himself had found, and was convinced

convinced by Experience, that they could not be driven out altogether, and that the *Israelites* had not strength enough; but the Reason which the Historian gives for this, I am sure, could not be God's Reason, that he would not drive them out altogether, *lest the Land should become desolate, and the Beasts of the Field should multiply against them.* This People, as the Historian himself assures us, were Six Hundred Thousand Men, between 20 and 60, besides Women and Children, which must have made the whole Number of Souls between Three and Four Millions. But it is wonderful, methinks, that such a Number of People should not be sufficient to stock and inhabit a Country, not a fourth Part so big as *England*, as this Country was not in its full Extent had they conquered it all. And yet a Land thus stocked with Inhabitants must have been more populous than *England*, the *Dutch* United Provinces, or any Part of *Europe* at this Day: Where we find no danger of a Desolation for want of People, or an overgrowth of the Beasts of the Field. But this Author is plainly very much distressed, let him turn which Way he will, he can find no sure footing, and he can say nothing in one Part of the Argument, but what he must be forced to contradict in another: And I must leave the Author to consider how far the Conquests of *Moses*, *Joshua*, or even of *David* himself, could be an Accomplishment of the Promise made to *Abraham*; for I do not know that God
ever

ever promised *Abraham* any Conquests at all, or that he ever intended to set them upon any such bloody Work, as the Destruction of other Nations, in order to be a temporal and spiritual Blessing to them. This godly Method of propagating Religion by force of Arms, and establishing Faith by Fire and Sword, was the Plan of *Moses*, and pursued by *David*, but *Abraham* was a Man of a quite different Character.

S E C T. III.

The Author's Notion of Inspiration, or immediate Revelation, refuted. His Pretence that the Ceremonial Law, or the Jewish Priesthood and Sacrifices, had been abolished by Revelation, shewn to be false and groundless. The whole Christian Circumcision, or Nazarene Jews, continued to obey the whole Law, as long as the Jewish Priesthood and Sacrifice continued. St Paul comply'd with this Law, only as a Matter of Liberty, and not as a Matter of Conscience, as all the Christian Jews did. St Paul's censuring this Law as carnal, blinding, and enslaving in its own Nature, and consequently that he could not, and did not, own its divine Institution, fully proved, and made good against the Author's Exceptions. The Epistle to the Hebrews not St Paul's, but written after the Destruction of the Temple. The Case of human Sacrifices, as indulged in the Law, made good against all the Author's Evasions.

THE Author in his third Chapter, comes to consider the Arguments which I had urged to support my Notion of the Mosaic Ceremonial Law, from the Authority of St Paul, which he thinks very extraordinary, and yet

yet I cannot see that he has offered any Thing material against it.

The Author here in the first Place endeavours to establish his own Notion, in Opposition to mine ; and then to answer the Arguments which I had urged to the contrary. In the first Place he quotes *St Paul to Timothy*, commending him, for that from a Child he had known the *holy Scriptures*, that were able to make him *wise to Salvation*, where by the *holy Scriptures*, saith the Author, he incontestably refers to the *Writings of the Old Testament*, those of *Moses and the Prophets*, which were the only *Scriptures Timothy could have been acquainted with from his Childhood*. Well, this is plain enough, *Timothy* had studied and practised from his Youth, those enlightening purifying Doctrines of Scripture, which were able to make him wise to Salvation ; that is, the Doctrines of Purity and Holiness, Peace and Love, which are contained in the Scriptures, for the Purposes of *Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction*, and *Righteousness*, and which to these Ends and Purposes were given by *Inspiration of God*. Here the Apostle not only refers to these Writings in general, but particularly to those doctrinal Parts of them, which *Timothy* had made his principal Study and Practice. But the Author here by *all Scripture*, means not all Scripture which had been given by *Inspiration of God*, to the Ends and Purposes here specified ; but the *whole Scripture in gross*, or every Thing that had been written, and which the Jews had

had received as authentic. But surely his Gloss here must be wrong, or else he would make the Apostle in this Place, assert a Thing that is contrary to all Truth, Sense, and Reason. The Apostle certainly could not here refer to the bare historical Parts of Scripture, which have no relation to Practice; as if the Historians had been inspired and infallible in all their Accounts of Facts, notwithstanding many Mistakes and Inconsistencies in History and Chronology, which their Writings abound with, and which yet the Jews had received as *authentic Scripture*. Nor could St *Paul* mean that Part of these Writings which relate only to the carnal blinding and enslaving Ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, which this Apostle every where condemns and explodes, as containing no Part of the *Will of God, for our Salvation*.

But this being a proper Place for it, let us consider a little what this Author can here mean by *Inspiration*, and what Test or Rule of Judgment he has concerning it. He seems to talk of it absolutely in the dark, and no more conveys any Idea of it, than one could to a blind Man of Light and Colours. It is plain, that under that extraordinary Dispensation of the Spirit, Men were not to receive or believe every *Spirit*, or every Matter of *Inspiration*, but to try the *Spirits* or Doctrines of *Inspiration*, whether they were of God or not. That is, to bring the Doctrines themselves to the Test of Reason and sound Judgment, and

to

to consider their Nature and Tendency, thereby to know whether they came from the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness, or of Error and Delusion.

Suppose any Doctrine or Doctrines to be delivered by an Angel in the most extraordinary Way possible, this extraordinary Manner of Conveyance, could be no Proof of the Doctrines, which might be all Error and Delusion, for any Thing the Senses could judge or determine about it. And therefore, the Doctrines themselves must be judged by the same Test and Rule, as if they had come to us in the most common and natural Way. The same Rule of Judgment and Reason therefore must be applied, in all Cases of internal Inspiration, or external Revelation. And if the Doctrines of Christ himself would not have born this Test of Light and Purity, they could not have been rationally received. And from hence, if an Angel from Heaven should have delivered any other Doctrines different from those of rational Light and Purity, they must have been rejected with what extraordinary miraculous Power soever they had been proposed, and delivered.

But this Author having secured St *Paul* on his Side by *Inspiration*, refers me to several other Passages out of that Apostle for my Conviction. The Passages he refers to, are those in which St *Paul* argues against the *Jews* from Scripture, as *divine Truth*, and the *Oracles of God*; of which Oracles, says he, *the*

Law of Moses, must certainly be regarded as the principal Part. But I hope he will not say, that the carnal blinding and enslaving Ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, which were this Apostle's *beggarly Elements*, and the *Rudiments of this World*, could be any Part of his *divine Oracles*. And yet even this too might in a proper Sense enough be said to come from God, and to have been ordered and directed by him in the Course of his Providence; and thus all Evil as well as Good, Plagues and Punishments, as well as Mercies and Blessings, are from God. All great Events that are brought about by any particular extraordinary Providence, beyond any human Foresight or Contrivance, are in a special Sense ascribed to God. All extraordinary Degrees or Measures of Wisdom and Knowledge, which some Men are endued with above others, are considered as the peculiar Gift of God to them; and if this Wisdom and Knowledge be in Things of a spiritual Nature, relating to the Knowledge of God, and our Duty and Happiness, it is in a more special Sense called divine Truth, or divine Wisdom from God. But it will be impossible for me ever to please this Author, for I see he is resolved never to suffer me to have any Thing from God. But, I hope, God will be more merciful, if I ascribe every Thing to him, and own myself as his Creature, Subject, and absolute Dependent. This Author cannot admit any Truth to be divine, or to come from God,
unless

unless it comes from him immediately by Inspiration or Revelation ; but what that is, or what those Truths are, which must be thus proved no body can tell, and he is not able to inform us. It will not content him, that the Scripture contains all Truth necessary to Salvation, unless the whole be thrown into the same Account in gross, and without Distinction ; as if every Thing there contained must be equally necessary, and all depend upon *supernatural Proof*. But St *Paul*, I am sure, did not thus lump the *Jewish Writings* ; and if he had, he could never have been the Apostle of the *Gentiles*. He has got some general Words, and technical Terms which he has taken from his Systems, such as *divine Truth*, *Truth coming from God*, *Inspiration*, *Revelation*, &c. which he makes use of in a loose declamatory Way, without ever affixing any clear determinate Ideas to them. It is really a very difficult Task to be forced to follow such a Writer through all his superficial preaching Harangues ; but such is my Fate, and I must submit to it.

Page 85. The Author comes to prove the immediate divine Institution of the Ceremonial Law ; against what I had offered to the contrary from St *Paul's* Authority. And here the Author, *Page 87*, before he comes to the Argument, premises some Things, which I must distinctly consider ; because he discovers a great deal of Artifice and Prevarication, but nothing at all of Truth or Reason in it. He says, “ It cannot be denied that in all his

“ Epistles, he [*St Paul*] cites the Mosaical
 “ and Prophetic Writings as of divine Autho-
 “ rity ; he delivered those Writings to all the
 “ Churches of the *Gentiles*, among whom he
 “ preached, and whom he instructed in the
 “ Christian Religion, under the Notion of
 “ Scripture, or divinely *inspired Writings*.”
 But when or where did this Apostle deliver
 the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, to his
Gentile Converts, or ground Christianity upon
 them, among the *Gentiles*, as inspired Writings ?
 It is true, the Apostle always argues from the
 Authority of *Moses* and the Prophets, against
 the *Jews* ; which was an Authority they could
 not reject, but he never once entred into the
 Question with them, about the immediate In-
 spiration of those Writings, and never so much
 as quotes them but to the *Jews*, where he
 found them dispersed among the *Gentiles*, and
 that the *Jewish* or judaizing Teachers had
 been tampering with the *Gentile* Converts be-
 fore, and furnished them with their own Wri-
 tings. But that this Apostle himself fur-
 nished them with those Writings, and founded
 the Truth of Christianity upon them among
 the *Gentiles*, is a mere Fiction and Forgery,
 which this assuming Writer can give no Proof,
 or produce any Instances of, and yet he says,
this cannot be denied. But, Page 88, “ he
 “ [*St Paul*] insists upon it, that he had *recei-*
 “ *ved an immediate Revelation from God*,
 “ concerning the abrogating the Ceremo-
 “ nial Law, as our Author himself acknow-
 “ ledges,

“ ledges, *Page 79.*” But this is another mere Fiction and Forgery, for never did *St Paul*, nor I, assert any such Thing. And therefore, all the Author’s Rant upon it afterwards, can only serve to shew the Candour and Justice of such spiritual systematical Scholastics. *St Paul* had a Revelation from God, whether mediate or immediate, I cannot say, for he himself has said nothing of that, but a Revelation he had for the Gospel which he preached among the *Gentiles*, independent of the Law of *Moses* ; but if he had received any such Revelation with regard to the *Jews*, he could not have complied with it himself, nor could the *Jewish* Converts have complied with it as they did. For, I hope, he will not say, that the *many Thousands* that *believed* in and about *Jerusalem*, were not all *zealous for the Law*. But what Law were they so zealous for ? Why surely, for the Ceremonial Law ; for there never was the least Doubt or Contention about the other : And no Body would pretend to say, that the Moral Law was repealed by Revelation. There was therefore, no Law nulled or reversed by Revelation, but the Ceremonial Law, which only the *Jews* had been subject to before, and bound them still as much as ever ; and *St Paul* himself as a *Jew* submitted to it, whenever he came to *Jerusalem*, and so as to appear in publick.

In the very Place which this Writer refers to, for my owning that the Ceremonial Law had been abrogated by a Revelation to *St Paul*, I

had proved the quite contrary, and the whole Proceedings of that Council at *Jerusalem*, and the great Question they had then before them, is a Demonstration to the contrary. The Question then was, *whether those who* from among the *Gentiles*, had been turned to God, *i. e.* St Paul's heathen Converts, should obey the whole Law, if not, what Part of the Ritual Law they should be bound to, for there was no Dispute about the Moral Law. And here, after much Debate and warm Contention, it was at last agreed to, that those heathen *Gentiles* who had been converted to Christianity, should not be bound to Circumcision, and Obedience to the whole Ceremonial Law; but only to the general Laws of Profelytism, which all the Profelytes of the Gate had ever complied with, upon the Authority of *Moses*. Here then it is evident from the very Nature of the Question, that this *circumcised Council*, the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren, met at *Jerusalem*, obeyed the whole Ceremonial Law themselves, as a Matter of Religion and good Conscience towards God, and the only Matter in Debate, was how far the heathen *Gentiles* must come into it. And with much ado, they were brought to exempt the heathen Converts from Circumcision, and Obedience to the whole Ritual Law; but absolutely insisted on their Compliance with the Law of Profelytism, *i. e.* A total Separation from the rest of the World, with regard to any friendly Correspondence, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, Eat-

ing and Drinking together at the same Table, &c. But I have so very largely considered this before, that I need not dwell longer upon it here.

St *Paul* in this Case pretended to no Revelation from God, as abrogating this Law, with regard to the *Jews*, and particularly that Council. And had he urged any such Thing, it must have been unanimously rejected and exploded as a mere Imposture, and vain Pretension, as God had revealed no such Matter to any of them; but he only pleaded and ever insisted on it afterwards, that he had a Revelation from God, which exempted the *Gentile* Converts from any Obligation at all to this Law, either in Whole, or in Part. But our Author weakly calls this an Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law, by an immediate Revelation to St *Paul*, and most unrighteously urges my Concession for it. This Law could not be abrogated or repealed with regard to the *Gentiles*, who had never been bound by it; and as to its continued Obligations to the Christian *Jews*, it never came into the Question. But our Author having weakly mistaken, or wilfully misrepresented the Case, as weakly or unjustly triumphs upon it, as if he had gained a Victory, and wrested St *Paul* out of my Hands.

But the plain Truth of the Case and Force of the Argument lies here: The circumcised Christians, or Christian *Jews*, submitted to the whole Ceremonial Law, and were as zealous

for it after, as they had been before their Conversion ; and St *Paul* himself complied with this Law, occasionally as a *Jew*, and when he happened to be in the Country, and was called upon to it. This I take to be a plain Matter of Fact. Now if the Ceremonial Law, as of original *divine Institution*, had been abrogated and set aside by a particular Revelation to this Apostle, he could not have complied with it all, upon any Principles of Reason, Religion, or Conscience : But as an original divine Institution not thus repealed, he must have complied with it as a Matter of Religion, and good Conscience towards God ; which yet he every where protests and declares against, and puts this Compliance or Non-compliance upon the Foot of Liberty and human Prudence. If the Author would but consider, and take in this short View of the Case, the Controversy might be soon brought to an Issue, but if he will not, or cannot do this, I should be sorry to be obliged to follow him, as long as he might think fit, to lead me thus a *Fox-Hunting* ; I would not call it a *Wild-Goose* Chace, because, I think, I am not pursuing an *untamed Creature*.

It is as certain as any Thing can be from Scripture, that the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren of the Circumcision, submitted to the whole Ritual Law, as a Matter of Religion and good Conscience towards God ; and so it must necessarily have been to them, who thought it an immediate divine Institution, or the Law of

I

God

God himself never repealed ; and it is very plain from their Practice, that it was never abrogated to them, or that they knew nothing of any such Repeal. And St *Paul* does not argue against this Law, as being once a necessary Part of *Religion* or *Obedience* to God, tho' now repealed and abrogated, and therefore no longer binding ; but he argues against it every where, as a mere human, carnal, political Thing ; and being in itself exceedingly Burdensome, and of a very blinding, enslaving Nature, they were at Liberty to set it aside, and ought to do so now, under the clearer Light of the Gospel. What St *Paul* argued against by Revelation, was the Imposition of this Law, either in Whole, or in Part, upon the *Gentiles* ; yet he does not argue against it with the *Jews*, as what had been once a Matter of Religion and Conscience, or necessary in Obedience to the Will of God, but was now formally and expressly an immediate Revelation repealed, and set aside as such. Had there been any such Revelation, or formal Repeal, *Peter*, and the other Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision, must doubtless have known it, and must have been first made to them, because they were more directly and immediately concerned in it. But they had been now preaching the Gospel above twenty Years, and yet knew nothing at all of any such Matter. This Law was vacated and set aside to St *Paul*, though a *Jew*, as to any Obligation upon Conscience, as soon as he came to have more Light and a better

better Understanding of Things ; and then he argues against it, from the Nature of the Thing itself, and not from any Repeal by Revelation. He proves, that it never was, or could have been, any Part of justifying Righteousness, or a Matter of Religion and Conscience, towards God, to an Understanding and Conscience rightly informed ; and that though he was in that Way of Thinking once, as well as the rest of the Nation, and as the Apostles, and Teachers of the Circumcision continued to be now, yet this had been all owing to the Ignorance, and blind Zeal, which they had been educated and brought up in ; one would think it impossible for any man to read St *Paul's* Writings, with the least Judgment or Impartiality, without seeing this to have been the true and real State of the Case. And as to *Peter*, it is very plain, that he was off and on in his Religion, or sometimes of one Side, and sometimes of the other. His Judgment at first seems to have been with St *Paul*, that no Part of the Ritual Law ought to be imposed on the *Gentiles*, not even that total absolute Separation from the rest of the World, which the Law had enjoined upon the Proselytes of the Gate ; and therefore, he continued for some Time at *Antioch* with St *Paul*, to eat and drink in common with the *Gentiles*. But he had not Courage and Resolution enough to stand to this, against the whole Body of the Christian Circumcision ; and therefore soon broke with that Apostle of the *Gentiles*,

tiles, and set himself up at the Head of the opposite Party. I had, as I thought, sufficiently represented and cleared up all this before, far enough to have prevented such wretched Cavils as this Writer brings; but without answering any thing that had been said, he rambles on upon a Presumption, that the Ceremonial Law had been at first in *St Paul's* Account an immediate divine Institution, and consequently a real Matter of Religion and Conscience to those who were under it, but was now vacated and done away, or repealed by Revelation; but for this, he has not the least Authority from *St Paul*, nor any other Apostle. This Apostle every where ascribes his strict Adherence to, and great Zeal for, this Part of the Law to his Ignorance and blind Zeal at that Time, while he thought it a Matter of Religion and Conscience, and not to his Obedience to *divine Authority*, and a real Matter of Religion and Conscience; as it must have been had that Law been of divine Institution; when our Author has sufficiently considered this, he may perhaps find it necessary to alter his Scheme a little, and to answer the *Moral Philosopher* upon some other Principles. But whatever he may do as to this, I am pretty sure, that he will never be able to support his own System, or to maintain the Character of a *rational Divine*, in the Way he goes now. For nothing I think can be plainer than this, from the New Testament, that the *Jazarene* or Christian *Jews* submitted to the whole

whole Law, as long as their Temple was standing, and their Sacrifices continued. And this Writer's great Confidence to the contrary, only shews, that he has taken his Notions from his Systems, and not from the Bible. And though his systematical Divinity, may get him a Maintenance, and serve him to harangue upon, it can never enable him to argue.

It would not be worth while to follow the Author any further in his general loose Harangues ; *St Paul's* Principles and Practice are perfectly consistent in my Scheme, and he cannot be charged with any thing of Artifice or Prevarication. But in this Author's Way, it will be impossible to justify that Apostle's Conduct upon any Principles of Reason, Religion, or Conscience. And therefore, I believe the Apostle would choose to stay with me rather than put himself in worse Hands ; and I cannot believe, that *Moses* and the *Prophets*, our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, or his *Apostles*, would ever make Choice of such an *Advocate*. I shall therefore proceed to consider the Answers which he has given, to what I had urged, concerning the Opposition between *Moses* and *St Paul*, or between the *Jewish* and Christian Religions. He would fain persuade us, that they are both one and the same Religion, and according to him *Christianity* itself, can be nothing else but *mystical Judaism*.

I had observed, that *Moses* had given the Law to the People, as a perpetual standing Ordinance throughout all their Generations,
and

and that consequently, any Abrogation or Repeal of it, must be contrary to the Nature, and declared Intention of the Law itself. To this the Author is pleased to answer, *Page 99*, That the Words *for ever, everlasting, &c.* do not always signify to the *End of the World*. This is sure enough, but certainly a Law given which was to bind for ever, and throughout all their Generations, must signify, throughout all their Generations, or as long as they should continue a People, or Body Politic, if it had any Sense at all. And it is very plain, that the whole Nation ever understood it so, and that the *Nazarene*, or Christian, *Jews*, submitted to the whole Law, and were as zealous for it, as any of the rest. And in this Case, *St Paul* himself appeals to the whole Nation, and to the *Roman* Courts, that they had nothing to charge him with as a *Jew*, in regard to any Breach or Violation of the Law.

I had urged, That *Moses* had established Propitiations and Atonements for Sin, by the Blood of Beasts, and that *St Paul* had declared it to be impossible, that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin. *Page 102*, The Author grants this Contradiction, and yet says, it is no Contradiction. *For though the Blood of Beasts might take away Sin under the Law, yet it could not do it now the Law was abolished.* But it is evident, That the Apostle does not argue from the Repeal of the Law, but from the Impossibility of the thing itself; and a thing that is once impossible, must be
always

always so. But the Author goes all along upon a Supposition, that this Law was an original divine Institution, and consequently necessary in point of Religion, and good Conscience towards God; but that it was afterwards repealed and set aside by Revelation. Had this been so, the Practice of it must afterwards have been as unlawful, as it was necessary before. And yet the Practice of the whole Church of *Jerusalem*, and this Apostle's own Practice, must stand against him, and convict him, if he is capable of Conviction. But indeed this Writer does not seem very capable of thinking out of his own Way: He is got into a common systematical Track which he must keep in, as long as he can talk at all.

But this Systematist found his first Shift would not do, and therefore he tries to solve the same Difficulty another Way, *Page 103*:
 “ The Apostle plainly shews us how to re-
 “ concile these, by declaring that the Gifts
 “ and Sacrifices under the Law *sanctified to*
 “ *the purifying of the Flesh*; and this external
 “ Atonement is what *Moses* intends, as the im-
 “ mediate Consequence of the Priest's sprink-
 “ ling the Blood.” The Author goes to harangue upon this, as if he was making the Matter as clear as the Sun; but I cannot for my Life understand, or make any Sense of, this external legal Purification and Atonement for Sin, where no Sin had been committed, for which the Law required the *Sacrifice*, and no Sin could be *pardoned* or done away by it.
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Was *legal Sin* no *Sin*, and legal Forgiveness no Pardon or Remission of Sin at all? I cannot conceive what Sin could be forgiven, or atoned for, by a Man's offering a Sacrifice in the legal Way, unless it was the Sin of not offering it, which would have been punished with Death, for any wilful presumptuous Refusal. But when a Man had brought his Sacrifice, and paid his Fine according to Law, the Priest forgave him the Sin which he had never committed, and, by sprinkling the Blood, declared, that he had, as to this Act, satisfied the Law. Could this Systematist have proved, that Sacrifices were any real Atonements at all under the Law, or that any Punishment was remitted or taken off by them, excepting the Punishment which must have been inflicted for Disobedience, in Case they had not thus complied with the Law, he had done something to the Purpose. But he could not do this, and yet talks as *ex cathedra*, and as a Master instructing his Pupils.

But by this Author's Way of talking about *Types*, he seems to understand no more of this typical, allegorical, or allusive Method, as to the Nature and Use of it, than a Child, when he is taught such Things in his Catechism. Any thing may be a Type of any other Thing, or Number of Things, where there is any the least remote Similitude or Resemblance. Thus the Wilderness, may be a *Type* of the *World*; and the Land of *Canaan* of *Heaven*; the Spring, the Altar, with the sacrificial Blood, might

might have some remote Resemblance to the shedding Christ's Blood upon the Cross; and the Bond-woman and the Free-woman, might have some Reference or Similitude to the Law and the Gospel. But would any Man in his Wits say, That these Things had originally any such Sense, Meaning, or Construction, because they were afterwards thus referred to in a Way of Allegory, Simile, and Allusion. Did the Wilderness, signify and allude to the whole World, and *Canaan* signify and represent Heaven: Did the sprinkling the Blood upon the Altar, signify the Crucifixion of Christ, and *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the Law and the Gospel, in the spiritual Sense and Reference of those Times? Such Allegories and Allusions may serve for Illustration, in comparing one thing to another, where there is any Resemblance, but they can establish no doctrinal Truth; and when taken literally, and according to the strict Nature and Reason of Things, they can serve to establish nothing but Falshood and Nonsense. And whatever scholastic Whims this Gentleman's Head may be filled with, he may depend on it, that St *Paul* was a wiser Man, and knew nothing at all of his *systematical Christianity*.

I had endeavoured to shew the absolute Repugnancy between the Ceremonial Law and the Gospel in their own Nature, and from the fundamental Principles upon which, both the one and the other are grounded; the one being a Scheme and Dispensation of Darknefs,
Slavery,

Slavery, and Superstition, but the other of rational Light, Liberty, and true Religion. Now, if this be so, and was so in *St Paul's* Opinion, it must follow, that such a blinding, enslaving Scheme of Superstition, and false Religion, could never have been a divine Institution, or any Matter of express positive Authority from God, at any time, or to any Nation. Indeed, God might think fit in his Providence to leave this People under such Blindness, Obduracy, Superstition, and false Notions of Religion for a long time, without any extraordinary Interposition to prevent or cure it, as it is plain he did. But that God, after 1500 Years, should change his Mind, and institute a Religion quite contrary to what he had instituted before, and as opposite to it as Light is to Darkness; this, I say, can only be the Object of a systematical and supernatural Faith. And, I hope, this Author will not say, that the Law was not the Religion of the *Jews*, since every divine Institution must be a matter of Religion and Conscience; and there can be no possible Distinction between Law and Religion, where God himself is the Lawgiver.

If this Law had not been instituted by any positive, divine Authority, there could be no occasion for any such Repeal or Abrogation of it, and this I take to be the Case in Fact. But if the Author cannot prove the positive divine *Institution*, he ought at least prove such an *Abrogation* of this Law, for otherwise his whole Scheme will be overthrown at once, and

he must entirely alter his System. But if there had been any such Repeal of the Law, it is certain, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, and the rest of the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision, knew nothing of it; for they continued in the Use of Circumcision, and submitted to the whole Law, for at least thirty Years after the Death of Christ, and after they had received the *Holy Ghost*. This Writer, therefore, cannot build his typical, allegorical, Christian Priesthood, upon a Repeal of the *Jewish* Priesthood, for it was never thus abrogated to them, and it could not be abrogated to the *Gentiles* who had never been under it, or bound by it. And when he comes to consider the Matter farther, and take his Notions from Scripture itself, rather than from modern Systems, and School-Divinity, he will find that the Nazarene or Christian *Jews* at that Time, were only a Party or Sect of *Jews*, or such among them as believed Jesus to be the Christ, or the national Messiah, whom the Prophets had foretold. And excepting this one single Point, they never altered their Religion, as to any thing else, either in Faith or Practice, but continued in Obedience to the whole Law as before. St *Paul* himself circumcised *Timothy* to please the *Jews*, i. e. the Nazarene or Christian *Jews*, for this Apostle never did any thing to humour or gratify the unbelieving *Jews*. It was such of the Pharisees as had joined this Christian Party, that struggled so hard in the Council for imposing Circumcision, and the whole Law, upon the

the *Gentiles*, but tho' these High-flyers were over-ruled, and the Council came to more moderate Terms, with regard to the *Gentiles*; yet they were far from thinking themselves exempted from such total Conformity and Obedience to the Law. And even St *Paul*, himself, when he was among them, acted as a *Jew*, and submitted to this Law, though not upon the same Principle of Religion and Conscience as they did, but only as a Matter of Liberty.

The *Jewish* Priesthood therefore was dissolved and set aside not by *Revelation*, but by Providence. They continued their Priesthood and Sacrifices as long as they had a Temple, and were in Possession of the holy Ground, to which that Sort of Worship had been confined; but when they were driven out of that, the Priesthood must be dissolved, and the Sacrifices cease of Course.

But the great Argument for a Christian everlasting *Priesthood*, without any Change or Succession of Persons, and yet analagous to that of the Law, as a Method of Atonement by an imputed Righteousness, has been chiefly grounded on the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. When or by whom this anonymous Epistle was writ, is very uncertain, and a Point which the most learned Critics could never agree about; some have thought it to be St *Paul's*, but without any original authentic Authority or Testimony. The chief Reason assigned for this, has been the rabbinical *Jewish* Learning contained in that Book, as if no other Person at that Time could

have been Master of so much Learning of this Sort as is here to be met with ; whereas there is nothing in it, but what was commonly known to all the *Jews*, and as the Epistle is directed to the *Hebrew Jews* in general, nothing is mentioned or insisted on out of their own Writings, but what they all knew and believed. But abating this trifling Pretence to St *Paul's* Authority, it is plain to me, that it is not written in that Apostle's Style and Language. There is nothing in it of his loftiness of Expression and strength of Imagination, as appears in all his genuine Epistles, especially where he is speaking of Christ, and the Gospel-Dispensation. And as St *Paul* set his Name to all his undoubted genuine and authentic Writings, and left himself accountable for them as the Author, this alone is enough to set aside this nameless Epistle, so far as that no Man can have a Right to urge it under St *Paul's* Authority. But it seems plain to me, that this Epistle, whoever was the Author, must have been written after the Destruction of the Temple, and the Cessation of the *Jewish* Priesthood and Sacrifices ; because it never mentions the Temple or Sacrifices as then subsisting, but always speaks of the *Jewish* Priesthood and Oeconomy as abolished, done away, and ceased. Which surely St *Paul*, himself, would never have done in his Time, especially to the *Hebrew Jews* who were all under it, even the Christian *Jews* themselves, and while the Apostle himself was complying with it, occasionally as he came among them.

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But however this might be, or when or by whom this Book might be written, our Author's Conceit, that the *Jewish* Priesthood and Sacrifices had been abolished, set aside, and done away, while the whole Christian Circumcision was under it, and submitting to it, is so wild and extravagant a Notion, that it deserves no Consideration at all.

S E C T. IV.

That the Law of Moses was merely political, and could extend only to outward Practice proved, and the Author's Objections to it shewn to be weak and trifling. That the Law indulged personal Intemperance or Excess in Wine and Women, and made no sufficient Provision against it by any civil Penalties, proved and farther confirmed. That this Nation was by their very Constitution separated from, and put into a State of Enmity and War with all other Nations, farther confirmed and justified. Persecution for Conscience or Religion, by punishing Idolatry with Death, and destroying Idolaters by Fire and Sword, eternally and immutably contrary to the Law of Nature and Reason, and no particular Circumstances under the Mosaic Dispensation could alter this Case or justify such a Law. God had never promised the Israelites, or Seed of Abraham, an everlasting Inheritance, or any Possession at all, in Canaan to be obtained by Conquest, Murder, and Destruction; and this Plan of gaining Possession, as projected by Moses, was a Violation of all the Terms and Conditions of the Abrahamic Covenant, and a Forfeiture of all the Promises and Blessings of it. The Case of the first born,
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as stated in the Moral Philosopher, farther considered and justified against the Author's Exceptions.

THE Author having thus removed the Objections I had made to the external Evidence of the Law, comes in his fourth Chapter to consider what I had offered with Regard to the internal Evidence or Characters, many of which appeared to me as inconsistent with any immediate divine Authority or positive Institution. I am sorry he has run out into so many long impertinent Declamations upon these Matters, which can only serve to amuse the Reader and lead him off from the Question; but I shall take the Pains to follow him so far as the Argument requires.

To my having urged that the Law of *Moses*, as to its Nature and Constitution, could only relate to outward Practice, so far as to secure the Peace and Well-being of Society, but could not reach the Heart and Conscience with Regard to the Temper and Disposition of the Mind, or the internal Principle of Action, in which all Religion must consist. To this the Author replies, *Pag. 117.* "But it is capable
 " of as clear a Proof as any Thing whatsoever,
 " and our Author himself is sensible of it, as
 " is evident from what he makes *Theophanes*,
 " his Christian *Jew*, object against *Philaethes*,
 " his Moral Philosopher, upon this Head." This Author concludes, That because *Moses* every where supposes the Reasonableness and

Fitness of an inward right Temper and Disposition of Mind, therefore it was the Subject-Matter of his Law, and that it was the proper End and Design of the Law to obtain and secure this inward right Temper and Disposition. But nothing can be more absurd and contradictory, than to suppose that an inward right Temper and Disposition of Mind can be obtained or procured by external Force and Compulsion. All political Laws must presuppose the Reasonableness of Truth and Righteousness, as to the inward Temper and Disposition, or otherwise it would be unjust to force or compel the outward Practice, but if the inward Principle is not found or supposed in Fact, the outward Practice, or political Part, must be secured and guarded by Force for the Good of Society; this is all that can possibly be done by any temporal penal Laws. The Law of *Moses* was merely temporal and political, and its Sanctions were all temporal; but the Law of Righteousness is quite of another Nature, and what none but God can take Cognizance of, so as to reward the obedient and punish the disobedient; and this he does in a Way and Method absolutely above and beyond all human Judgment; but *Moses*, with Regard to the People of *Israel*, acted the Part of a Prophet and Preacher of Righteousness, as well as of a Lawgiver and Judge, in the making and executing his own Laws. But whenever *Moses* preaches Moral Truth and Righteousness to the People, this Author pretends that he is enforcing and executing his

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own Law; and as to the Law which forbids the coveting the Goods or Property of another, it must relate to the outward Act, Robbery, Violence, or Rapine, in forcibly seizing the Goods or Property of another, and not barely to the inward Act of coveting, desiring, or wishing for another Man's Property, which could not possibly fall under the Cognizance of any human penal Law. And if this was not the meaning, There would be a Law against Theft, but no Law against Robbery, Rapine, or Plunder, in the whole Decalogue. But this Author's Zeal for *Moses* rises so very high, that he seems fond of making him a *Judge of Conscience*, and of mounting him to the *Throne of God*.

St *Paul* every where distinguishes the Law of *Moses* from the Law of Faith, Fidelity, or Righteousness towards God. He proves at large, that Righteousness could never be obtained by the Law, which was a Law of Works or outward Obedience only; and that the Law of Faith, or Righteousness, by which Men must be justified and accepted of God, was the same before the Law as afterward, and must be always immutably the same from the beginning of the World to the End. This Apostle labours the Point very much, to shew that the Righteousness of Christ, or the Righteousness which he came to restore, establish, and confirm, was the very same with the *Abrahamic* Righteousness, or the eternal, immutable Law, Covenant, or Rule of Righteousness, by which *Abraham* was accepted,
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and that this Covenant was not peculiar to any one People or Nation, but had been made in *Abraham* with all the Faithful in all Nations, and to the End of the World. I have been the larger upon this, because our Author seems willing to confound the most different and opposite Things in the World. And indeed I believe he would confound any Thing, and affirm or deny any Thing for the Sake of contradicting me. And *pag.* 122, he quotes a Passage out of *Deuteronomy*, *Chap.* xxix. 19, 20. to prove that the Law of *Moses* extended to Gluttony; Drunkenness, and such Acts of personal Intemperance as only hurt the Man himself, without directly affecting others. But it is very plain, that *Moses* in this Place is applying himself to the People as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteousness, as he frequently does in other Places, with Regard to Sins which could not come under the Cognizance and penal Sanctions of the Law. He there threatens such Sinners with the Vengeance of God, as Offenders against the Law and Rule of Righteousness, but he does not command the Law to be executed upon them, or say that they shall surely be put to Death, or undergo any other Punishment in a Course of Law. And if this Author would prove any Thing against me, he must produce some Law, Statute, or Judgment of *Moses*, where such Acts of personal Intemperance are made penal. But for Want of this no Nation in the World ever ran into greater Excesses and Enormities of this Kind, as appears from the Declamations of the

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Prophets

Prophets against it in many Places. And as these were very gross and open Immoralities, not particularly provided or guarded against by Law, I think any Man but the Author must own that the Law was herein defective.

To my saying that this Nation had been put into a State of Enmity and War with all the rest of the World, so far as that they could not so much as eat or drink with other People, or join with them in any the least Act of Civility and common Respect, the Author replies, *page* 126. "That this is an unfair Representation. It must be considered indeed that the Law of *Moses*, though of divine Institution and Authority, never was intended to be an universal Law obligatory to all Mankind, but was peculiarly designed for that one Nation, to whom it was immediately directed and published; and it was in the Nature of a special Covenant between God and them." But was not this an excellent Way to make them a Blessing to all other Nations, and the Means or Instruments of propagating the true Religion in the World, by obliging them not so much as to converse with them, or to come into their Company, so far as they could avoid it, nor to shew them the least Marks of common Respect, Civility, or Decency? If this was not putting them into a State of Enmity and War with all the rest of Mankind, by the very Nature of their Constitution, I cannot conceive what should be so. I believe this Author can hardly tell me what more effectual Method could

could have been taken to establish a State of eternal Enmity and War between them and the rest of the World ; or how it should be possible, that a People thus constituted could propagate the true Religion to other Nations, but by force of Arms. This was the Method by which *Moses* and his Successors got their Settlement in that Country at first, and by which they violated all the Terms and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant or Law of Righteousness. And when this Declaration of War with the rest of the World had been once made and confirmed by their very Constitution, it could not be otherwise in the natural Course of Things, but that the War must be continued till one Side or other had got the Victory, and this proved to be the Case in Fact.

The Author observes in the next Page, that this People were not only obliged to love and shew Kindness to *one another but to Strangers too*. And here he quotes the several Texts out of the Law, which obliged them to shew such Kindness to *the Strangers* ; but he does not tell the Reader what *Strangers* these were, which must quite have spoiled his Harangue. It is evident from all the Passages he quotes, that they were their own naturalized Strangers, or the Profelytes who lived among them, and who worshipped the *same God*, and made a Part of the *same Nation* ; but they could shew no Kindness, nor have any Thing to do with any other Strangers who were not of their Nation and Religion. But those Profelytes of the Gate
though

though they were not circumcised, yet they complied with the sacrificial Part of the Law, and paid their Tithes and Dues to the Priests. And therefore *Solomon* when he built the Temple, assigned a particular Court for those devout *Gentiles*, who came up with their Gifts and Offerings to *Jerusalem*; and he prays for them, that God would bestow on them all the Favours and Blessings of his own People.

This Writer indeed has the Assurance afterwards, *Page* 129. to deny that the Profelytes of the Gate were naturalized Strangers, or that they were considered and owned as Members of the same Society. I am very sure, that by the Law of *Moses* they were to be received, considered, and treated, as Brethren and Fellow-Citizens, and were under the Protection of the Law as much as the circumcised *Jews* themselves, while they lived among them; and this was all that I meant by *Naturalization*; but if this Writer has any other more peculiar Sense, I would not dispute with him about a Word. But this is plain that all their Friendship, Conversation, Intercourse, and Familiarity, was to be confined to their own Religion, so far as owning and worshipping the one God was any peculiar Religion of theirs; and with the rest of the World they were put into a State of Enmity and War. But it is impossible that this People should ever have been intended or promised as a Blessing to other Nations, upon a Foot that would not suffer them to have any peaceable Intercourse or Communication with
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any Nation but their own, and any Man who will but open his Eyes may see, that as soon as ~~the~~ *Mosaic* Dispensation took place, the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or Law of Righteousness, was set aside. But this it is for an *ignorant Fellow* to have to do with a *Master of Arts*.

This Author pretends, That though Persecution for Conscience sake, or establishing true Religion by force of Arms, would be wrong now, and must be wrong under all Circumstances of which we can judge; yet it does not follow, that therefore it was wrong under a Theocracy, or under the Circumstances of the *Israelites* when that Law was given. This is the Sum of his whole Argument under this Head. But the Reason against Persecution for Conscience sake, or establishing Religion by outward Force and Violence, does not at all depend upon different and variable Circumstances of Persons and Things, which might make some Things right and reasonable at one Time that would not be so at another. The Argument here depends on the eternal immutable Reason and Fitness of Things, the moral Perfections of God, and the Nature of Religion itself. To force Religion itself upon Conscience and inward Judgment is impossible in the Nature of the Thing, and to force the outward Practice against Conscience and inward Judgment is tyrannical, unjust, and contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God; this therefore must be eternally and in all Cases wrong, and as much so in *Moses* as in the *Pope*, or any other

other Persecutors at this Time; and if he can justify it in one, why not in the other, since the same *divine Authority* is pleaded for it now as then. But to say that the Thing might be right then, and to that People, though not at other Times, or to any other People for the *Reasons given*, when he had given *no Reasons*, and could give none, is a mere Evasion, and such as could come from none but a *Master of Arts*. He all along supposes this Law to have been of *positive divine Authority*, which is the very Thing in Question, and what he ought to have proved a little otherwise than he has done. But this Writer could prove any Thing in the World, if you would but grant his Suppositions, and not dispute with him at all.

The Author, *page 133*, says, “ It is hard to “ conceive upon what Grounds this Writer “ could assert as he does, that *Moses* was very “ confident that his People should have it in “ their Power to extend their conquering Arms, “ not only in *Canaan*, but over all the rest of the “ World.” This Author seems to be most at a Loss where there is least Reason for it. I suppose he will grant me, that when *Moses* undertook the Conquest of *Canaan*, he was very confident that God would bless and succeed him in it, or fully persuaded that he was taking the right Way of fulfilling the *Abrahamic* Covenant and Promise, of making his People a Blessing to all Nations, or the Means of propagating the Knowledge and Worship of the true God throughout the Earth. Had he not been
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very confident of this, he would never have run so great a Risk, or taken any such Method. After he had taken Possession of a Country by Fire and Sword, and given a Law which must necessarily establish and perpetuate an Enmity and State of War with all other Nations, he could have no other possible Way of spreading Religion but by Force of Arms, for the Nature of the Conquest must necessarily, and in the Course of Things, exasperate the neighbouring Nations, and arm all their Passions against such bloody Robbers and Plunderers ; but he was fully persuaded, that if his People kept to his Law, God would enable them to conquer all their Enemies, which must have been the whole World, so far as their Name had spread. But the Hopes and Confidence of *Moses* all came to nothing, after 40 Years Experience of the incurable Blindness and Obduracy of the People ; and indeed he could have had no reasonable Ground to expect Success at first, in the Way he took to accomplish the Promise made to *Abraham*, since the very Method which he took to bring it about, was a Violation of that Covenant of Peace and Righteousness, and ascribing the Want of Success afterward to the Peoples not obeying or keeping close enough to that rigorous burdensome Law, which must have been worse than the *Egyptian* Bondage itself, was a mere Blind, and has been always made Use of to cover over and disguise an unjustifiable Attempt, contrary to all the Laws of Nature and Nations ; and equally contrary

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to the Nature and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant and Promise, or the Law of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness. Had the People kept to this, they could have had no Need of so rigorous a Law, or so bloody and unsuccessful a War. It does not appear that they ever fell into Idolatry in the Wilderness, after the first Instance of the golden Calf, and they continued after this to worship the true God during the Lives of *Joshua* and the Elders, which could not be less than 40 Years more, and yet they could not conquer the Country. The Pretence therefore that God punished them only for their Idolatry, was vain and ill-grounded: But the original Cry of Blood and Murder still followed them throughout all their Generations, and kept them almost continually immersed in Blood, till at length they were utterly extirpated and dispersed, and made the Scorn and By-Word of the whole World. Such an Example has Providence made of a Nation that pretended to fulfil a Covenant or Promise of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness, by the most unexampled Inhumanity, Violence, and Rapine; and ascribing all this to a positive divine Authority, is reversing the Law of Nature, and impeaching all the divine Perfections only to justify Theft and Perjury, Robbery and Murder. How all such Things may be ascribed to God, as bringing them about, and permitting them in the Course of his Providence, is visible enough; but ascribing them to a *positive Will*, is destroying and setting aside all the Boundaries

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and natural Distinction between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong. But most unhappy beyond all Expression would be the Lot of Mankind, if God had left them no common Rule or Measure of Truth and Falsehood, Good and Evil, independent of the Claims and Pretensions of Enthusiasm and Imposture. But this Author, amidst all his Divinity and School-learning, does not seem to have Discernment enough, to see how the *Hebrew* Historians generally ascribe Things to God, in a Sense very different from what we should now. In a Multitude of Instances they seem to speak of a *positive Will*, where it is evident that nothing more could be meant by it than Permission; and such was the Temper of the People, that they could receive nothing as from God, but under some Appearance or other of *positive Authority*.

There are Instances enough of this, which a Man of his Understanding and Knowledge in the Scriptures cannot be ignorant of. But whatever they might do formerly, we must distinguish now between Permission and Commission, with Regard to God and Providence; though I think he has here left himself no Rule or Criterion of Judgment in this Case; and though he would scarce admit of such Confusion in any other Instance, yet he thinks he must admit it here with Regard to the *divine Authority* of the *Mosaic Dispensation*. In short, I deny that ever God had promised *Abraham* or his Seed the Possession of the Land by *Conquest*, or in a Way of Violence and Bloodshed.

shed. This I think I have proved, and if I had said no more, this is a sufficient Answer to the Author's Argument in this Chapter, concerning the positive divine Authority of *Moses*.

But the Author in his next or fifth Chapter goes farther, and endeavours to clear this Law from some Imputations, which I thought lay very hard upon it, as a Matter of immediate positive divine Institution. And I hope this Writer will here keep to Scripture-Authority, and not try to work off or evade any Thing that may be plainly proved from thence ; and if some Things should appear shocking to him in our present Notions and Apprehensions of Things, he has an Answer ready, That however strange or unreasonable those Things might be thought now, they were yet wise, reasonable, and fit, at that Time, and under such Circumstances.

I had clearly proved, and beyond the Possibility of any fair Answer, that human Sacrifices were *indulged* and allowed, though not *enjoined*, by the Law of *Moses*, and that they were supposed and included among the several other Cases of *Vows* or *Free-will* Offerings. The Author, I presume, saw, that granting this would be giving up the immediate divine Authority of that Law ; but the Manner in which he tries to get off with it, is so shamefully evasive, that it plainly shews him to have been struggling with his own Convictions. He pretends, that the Persons or Things to be given up and devoted to God in Sacrifice, by a special or ab-

solute Vow and Free-will-offering, as *Levit.* xxvii. 29. were devoted and given up to him as a *Curse*, or in a Way of Vengeance, as the *Canaanites* were. But can any Thing be more absurd or contradictory than this? Any Thing accursed or unclean could not possibly be offered or accepted in Sacrifice, nor could they devote or dedicate any Thing as a Vow or Free-will-offering, which the Law had made due before. Things offered in this Way must be a Man's own Property, and at his own Disposal, without any prior Right or Claim against him. As to the Word *Cherem* which he cavils about, it is plain, that from the Use of it in Scripture, it signifies any Thing in general that is to be utterly destroyed without any Redemption or Retrieve, whether as a Curse, and in a Way of Wrath and Vengeance, or by Sacrifice and Offering to the Lord. And will this Author say that *Jephtha's* Daughter was doomed to Destruction like the *Canaanites*, or that her Father vowed her to the Lord as a Curse? But whether *Jephtha* really did sacrifice his Daughter or not, the Author says *has been a Question among the most learned Critics, both among the Jews and Christians, and is still like to be so.* That is, they have doubted whether this Story, as the Scripture relates it, is true or not, or whether the Historian has here given us the real Matter of Fact; for they could have no other real Ground or Cause of doubting. *But let us suppose,* says he, *that Jephtha did sacrifice his Daughter, it only follows that he did wrong*

in it, through a mistaken Zeal and Scrupulosity: Since, as I have proved, the Law of Moses nowhere allowed human Sacrifices. But no such Thing will follow that this was done by a mistaken Zeal in *Jephtha*, nor has he at all proved that this Law did not allow of human Sacrifices. I have given him an exprefs Statute of that Law, where such Sacrifices are allowed as Vows or Free-will-offerings, and shewn the Weakness and Insufficiency of that poor Cavil or Criticism, by which he endeavoured to elude it. That there were no more Instances of this afterwards, or none left upon Record, is no great Wonder, since *Jephtha's* Rashness in making such a Vow, and thereby laying himself under such a Necessity of Law, was never approved of, and the whole Nation, or Tribe at least, afterwards kept an annual Mourning for it, which plainly shews that the Execution of this Vow was from a Necessity not to be dispensed with, when the Vow had been once made. As to the Passages he has referred to, where God absolutely forbad this People to worship and offer Sacrifices to him after the Manner of the Heathens, they conclude nothing at all. For I believe it would be hard to find any Sort or Kind of Sacrifices in Use among the Heathens, that *Moses* did not adopt into his own Scheme of Superstition, only they were not to be offered in the same Places, nor to the same Gods. But there was nothing so dear and valuable which the Heathens might offer to their false

Gods, but the *Israelites* might offer to their own true God.

But how shocking soever these Things may appear, when considered as the Worship of the true God, the eternal infinite Creator himself, yet they will not appear so very surprising, when they are taken only as a Worship paid to the local, oracular, and tutelar God of *Israel*, as distinguished from the like local, tutelar Gods of other Nations. That this grossly ignorant and most stupid People had such a God, under the same Notion with the Heathen Gods, is indisputably clear through the whole Story; and accordingly they worshipped him in the same superstitious Way, and with the same Sort of external, useless, and senseless Ceremonies; and therefore the popular Religion which *Moses* contrived for the common Herd, who were capable of no better, was but a more refined Scheme of Superstition, which might serve to keep them from the grosser Idolatry of the *Egyptians*, and other Nations, till the Time might come in which they should be brought to a more rational and spiritual Worship, suitable to the Nature and Perfections of the infinite eternal Creator. It is plain, that while this People had such a local tutelar God of their own, they were almost continually revolting to the Worship of other Gods, who by giving their Worshipers better Success in War, often happened to be too hard for their own God. But when this Idol of theirs had been burnt by the *Babylonians* in his own Temple,
the

the People having lost their own, never afterwards received or worshipped the tutelar Gods of other Nations, but in all Times to come kept themselves free from that Sort of Superstition and Idolatry. The Nations round about could not but conceive of the local, tutelar God of *Israel* under the same Notion which they did of their *own*, and must think him the most cruel, vengeful, and implacable of all other Gods, who would set his Worshippers and Votaries on a Work so abhorrent to Nature, and so contrary to all Right and Reason; and this must give them the utmost Abhorrence and Detestation both of this People and their God. All this in its natural and just Consequences has been verified in Fact, and the Course of God's Providence, as the History of that People abundantly proves. But thus much for the local, tutelar God, or popular Idol of *Israel*, that I am sure could not be the true God, who can be worshipped only by a *rational Service in Spirit and in Truth*, and who only *seeketh such to worship him*.

But I must now again return to the Author where I left him. I had observed, *Mor. Philos.* p. 137, 138. that God's claiming all the First-born of *Israel* as *holy to himself*, both of Man and Beast, was a plain Proof of his Right to both, and must lay an equal Obligation to one as much as the other; for surely a positive, absolute Claim from God must not only prove a *Right*, but lay an *Obligation*, or create a *Law*, as long as it subsists. But this *Right* and con-

sequent *Obligation*, with regard to the human Kind, was not insisted on, or put in Execution, with respect to the human Kind, but remitted and excused on the reasonable Consideration that God would accept the First-born of the Tribe of *Levi* to serve at the Tabernacle, and to be distinguished by particular Marks of Honour there, and this to exempt the First-born of the other Tribes from the Honour and Happiness of being sacrificed. This is the Representation which I had given of the Matter, and which one would think should be plain Sense, and intelligible enough, as I am sure, it is a true and faithful Representation, so far as I can see or understand it. But the Reader shall now see what this Author makes of it, and how he treats me upon it. And I shall here quote him out, that no Mistakes or Cavils may arise about it.

“ The Argument he endeavours to bring from
 “ the Law for redeeming the First-born, may be
 “ turned against him, and proves the very con-
 “ trary of what he produces it for. Since when
 “ God challenges the First-born of Man and
 “ Beast to himself, in Memorial of his slaying
 “ the First-born of the *Egyptians*, and sparing
 “ the *Israelites*, which was a wise Constitution,
 “ aptly contrived to keep up a constant Memorial
 “ of this most extraordinary Event, and conse-
 “ quently of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, the
 “ Remembrance of which was of high Impor-
 “ tance to preserve throughout all their Genera-
 “ tions ; I say, when he made this Constitution,
 “ or

“ or commanded the First-born among clean
 “ Beasts to be sacrificed ; but with regard to the
 “ First-born among unclean Beasts, which were
 “ forbidden in the Law to be sacrificed, and all
 “ the First-born among Men, they were expressly
 “ commanded to redeem them ; a manifest
 “ Proof, that as he would not have unclean
 “ Beasts to be sacrificed, so neither would he
 “ have *any human Sacrifices to be offered to him.*
 “ This is the plain original Law relating to that
 “ Matter, *Exod. xiii. 13, 18.* yet this Writer has
 “ the Confidence to tell us, that this Law concerns
 “ the Redemption of the First-born, which
 “ he calls a *severe Law*, whereby were enjoined
 “ *such terrible Things in Righteousness* ; laid them
 “ under an Obligation to sacrifice their First-born
 “ Children unto God. He is pleased indeed to
 “ allow that this Law *was afterwards very much*
 “ *mitigated, or rather repealed, viz. upon God’s*
 “ *accepting all the Males of Levi for the First-*
 “ *born Males of all, as a Ransom or Redemption*
 “ *of their Lives.* And if we would know
 “ how far that severe Law was mitigated
 “ or repealed, he informs us that it consisted
 “ in this, *that God hereby removed*
 “ *the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices,*
 “ *and left it to the free Choice and voluntary*
 “ *Oblation of the People, whether their*
 “ *Burnt-Offerings of this Kind should be Male*
 “ *or Female, and whether it should be the First-*
 “ *born or not.* So that he supposes, that before
 “ the Levites were taken in instead of the
 “ First-born, the Israelites were under a legal
 “ Obligation

“ Obligation to offer up all their First-born
“ Male Children as Sacrifices or Burnt-Offer-
“ ings to the Lord ; and that afterward they
“ had the Favour done them to leave it to
“ their *Choice*, not whether they should of-
“ fer up *any of their Children at all*, but to
“ offer up either Males or Females, or any
“ other of their Children, whether of the First-
“ born or not.” I have given all this as a Specimen of the Author’s Skill and Dexterity in Argument, but I believe there never was such an Interpreter or Commentator before. It is plain, that I had supposed an immediate Obligation to arise from God’s Claim of Right and Declaration of his Will, concerning their offering up all their First-born of both Man and Beast, antecedent to the Mitigation or Remission of this Obligation afterwards, by God’s accepting the *Levitical* Males for the First-born of all the other Tribes. But after this gracious Mitigation of the first Demand, the People were left at Liberty whether they would offer any Sacrifices of the human Kind or not, and if they did, it might be any Child, Son or Daughter, without any Regard to a First-born. But this candid Writer makes me say, That after the Mitigation of, or dispensing with, that first Law, or rigorous Demand of the First-born of Man as well as Beast, it was left to their *Choice*, not whether they would offer any *human Sacrifices* or no, but whether it should be the *First-born* or *any other Child*. But does this Man believe a God or a Judgment to
come ?

come? I am sure, if he cannot here blush for himself, all his Friends must blush for him. Is it possible that it should be left to their Choice whether they would offer any *human Sacrifice* at all or not, and yet only left to their Choice whether it should be a *First-born* or not? Thus has this Writer's Zeal transported him beyond all the Bounds of Truth, Reason, or Conscience. And while he is maintaining the fundamental Principles of all Imposture, Superstition, and Idolatry, he blesses himself in his Heart, as doing God and Religion good Service, and means nothing by divine *Authority*, but Truth without Reason, or religious Obligations without any rational Light or Evidence to the Understanding, but a blind implicit Submission to Authority.

But to return to the Argument; the great Question here is, in what Sense the First-born Males of *Israel* had been reserved as *holy to the Lord*, and what the Redemption or Deliverance from this *State of Holiness* was, to which they were afterwards intitled? Whatever this was, it must plainly have been by two different Laws, Constitutions, or Designations, in which the one was reversed or set aside to make Way for the other; and yet this Author most absurdly supposes and asserts, that both these were one and the same Constitution or Designation, and that there was no Alteration, Reversement, or Repeal, in the Case. It is plain, that this Redemption and Right, or Grant of it, was looked upon as a very high Favour, or a Deliverance from some great

great Evil ; and therefore if the *Levites* had been put into the same State from which the others had been delivered, they must have been punished in the others Stead, and the Family of the two Brothers must have suffered for the Pleasure and Happiness of the other Tribes. But this looks a little unlikely, and therefore it is highly probable it could not have been the Case, what the Phrase of reserving as *holy to the Lord* signifies, with Regard to the First-born Males among the clean Beasts, is very evident, and there is not the least Ground or Reason to think that it must not signify the same in both Cases, and that the First-born Males of the human and brutal Kind had at first been reserved and set apart as *holy to the Lord* in the same Sense. And this is the more evident, because when the *Levitical* Males come to be substituted for the First-born of the other Tribes, the Expression is quite altered, and it is not said they shall be *holy to the Lord*, as the others were before, but *they shall be mine, i. e.* my chief Servants or peculiar Favourites, to wear my Livery and minister in my Court, to eat at my Table, to be exempted from all other Business, Care, and Toil, and to live in Ease and Idleness, Pleasure and Luxury, on the Fruits of the Sweat and Labour of the whole People besides. This was really the Case of the *Levites*, and this must have been the Misery, Death, or Slavery, from which the First-born had been redeemed and delivered, had there been such Exchange and Substitution as
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some Schematists imagine. But the bare representing such an Hypothesis is enough to expose it, and turn it into Ridicule, since, if this had been all that was meant by it, it is plain that this could have been no Sense at all.

But there is another Way of explaining this Matter, and making it as clear as Day-light upon the Principles of *human Policy*, though not of *School-Divinity*. And therefore since the Divines are so much at a Loss about it, why may not I attempt another Way? It is plain then from the frequent Murmurings and Discontents of the People, and their charging *Moses* and *Aaron* with taking too much upon them, that the main Point which *Moses* as a Politician had to gain with them was, how to settle the Government or Priesthood in the Tribe of *Levi*, and thereby secure it to his own Family; and considering the turbulent Temper of the People, this required some Management and Contrivance; and therefore *Moses* having Credit and Influence enough with them, he must procure an immediate positive Law from God to reserve their First-born both of Man and Beast as holy to the Lord in the sacrificial Sense. This was a most severe Law, but yet God, had not made it so absolute, but it might be dispensed with in Regard to the human Kind, if the Priesthood was settled in the Tribe of *Levi*, or in the Family of *Moses* and *Aaron*; and then God was ready to take all the Males of that Tribe in lieu of the First-born Males of the other Tribes, whose Lives were other-

otherwise all forfeited, and reserved to a more sacred Use. It is easy to conceive how this must take with them, and how readily and joyfully they would comply with such a Law, and become the Servants and Tributaries of that Tribe for ever, to save the Lives of their First-born. Such a Law must for ever deter them from invading the Office, Privilege, and Prerogative of the *Levites*. I do not say this was really the Case, but supposing it so, it would give a clearer and more satisfactory Account of the Matter than any of our systematical Divines have yet done. And this I am sure of, that our Author's Way of seeming to condemn all Arguments which he cannot answer, and throwing them off as not worth answering, is perfectly shameless, and if he can find no better Arguments than he has mustered up already, I am willing to leave this Matter just where it now stands.

He next comes to the Case of *Abraham's* offering up his Son, and the Heir of the Promise, at the supposed Command of God. In which, as in all other Instances, he makes as light of me as if I was not worthy to be his *Lamp-Boy* or *Shoe-Cleaner*, and this perhaps may be true enough; but yet I hope the candid Reader will not despise my Arguments ever the more for it.

He dwells long upon this Case of *Abraham*, and spends above 20 Pages about it, and at last leaves it just as he found it, or altogether improbable and incredible. I had urged, that

as the Matter of this Command is contrary to the Law of Nature, to the Moral Perfections of God, and to all the Affections, Passions, and Sentiments which God himself has implanted in human Nature, it must be unreasonable and incredible in itself, and in the Nature and Reason of Things. And this rational Evidence to the Understanding being vastly superior and prior to any historical Proof, no such lower Proof from Testimony can set it aside. This is my Argument, that the Thing itself is of such a Nature, as not to be capable of Proof by any historical Evidence or Testimony. This Writer continually throughout his whole Harangue goes upon If's and May-bee's; but I am not disputing against Possibilities, but only considering where the Probability or superior Evidence lies, and upon this Foot I am willing to rest the whole Matter as it now stands, after what has been said on both Sides.

It may be supposed indeed, that in the short imperfect Account of this Affair, that we have transmitted to us, there may have been some original Circumstances relating to it left out, which might have cleared up the whole Matter, and rendered the Story very reasonable and credible. As *Abraham* and his Family were then the only Worshippers of the true God, the People of the Land and Country about might thus urge or press him, that if his God was the only true God, or the one Creator and Disposer of all Things, he should sacrifice his only Son and Heir, and then if his
God

God would raise him from the Dead, put him into the same State of Life and Action as before, and fulfil his Promises in him, they would all believe in and worship the God of *Abraham*, and be of his Religion; and *Abraham* upon this might have a strong indubitable Perswasion and Impression upon his Mind, that God would give them this Conviction, and that this over-bearing Faith or Perswasion of his must come from God. But if this was the Case, the Event proved the contrary, and that God did not intend to propagate the true Religion and Worship in such a miraculous Way; or if there must be some visible Appearance and audible Voice in the Case, suppose an Angel had appeared to *Abraham*, and told him, that if he would sacrifice his Son, and burn him to Ashes, God would bring him into Life again, and make good all his Promises to him, this might have been sufficient to put *Abraham* upon the Work, without any of the otherwise shocking Circumstances to human Nature; but which Way soever this Case is put, it must be plain that the Thing did not come immediately from God, and *Abraham's* Perswasion in this Case was not well grounded; however, it served to shew the Strength and Invincibility of *Abraham's* Faith and Trust in God, and that he was ready to do any Thing, or part with any Thing, at his Command. But then that God himself should command this to try what *Abraham* would do in such a Case, as if God did not know as well

well without it, is the most absurd and ridiculous Supposition in the World.

The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, to whom this Writer refers, without any authentic Authority, as *St Paul*, seems to place this Case of *Abraham* upon the very same Foot; and *Abraham* considered or reasoned with himself, or was fully convinced and perswaded in his own Mind, that if he should sacrifice his Son, God would certainly raise him again from the Dead, and make good his Promises in him after all. But it is certain that God had never intended or promised any such Thing; and therefore *Abraham's* Faith here, however strong and overbearing, was yet presumptive, or an irrational enthusiastic Perswasion, which God himself could never have been the Author of; and if he was mistaken in this, he might be in other Cases too, where he depended on any immediate Revelation or Communication from God, above and beyond the rational Evidence or Appearance of Things to his Understanding. And as to the 400 Years of sojourning, at the End of which they were to be put into the quiet peaceable Possession of the Land for ever, or throughout all their Generations, whether it be regarded as a Prophecy or Promise, it was plainly never fulfilled. If we take it as a Prophecy, therefore it must have been a false Prophecy; and if it is considered as a conditional Promise, those Conditions having been never complied with, it could not

be accomplished; and had that People staid in *Egypt* till they could have been delivered in God's own Way, or upon the Terms of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, they must have been there still.

But it seems plain from the Account we have of the Matter, that *Abraham* had a very strong Perswasion, however he came by it, that the Sacrifice of an only Son would be so acceptable to God, as to induce him to work the most stupendous Miracle, as the Reward of such high Devotion, and as a Testimony of his Approbation. And Dr *Hyde de Relig. Vet. Persar.* informs us, That this Case of *Abraham* was the Original or first Occasion of human Sacrifices all over the East; and if that was so, this Mistake of *Abraham's* was very fatal to Mankind, and he proved, in the Event, a greater Corrupter than Reformer of the World. But if *Abraham* himself carried this Matter too far, and suffered his Imagination and Strength of Perswasion about Revelation and immediate Communications from God, sometimes to transport him beyond the Bounds of Reason and Truth, this ought to caution all our modern Schematists not to push such a Principle of Error and Deception still farther, by abusing and misrepresenting others under the odious Names of *Deists, Free-Thinkers, Infidels, Enemies to Christianity, &c.* only because they cannot give into the same Enthusiastic Scheme, but require plain Reason and
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consistent Sense for what they believe. And could this learned Writer be but prevailed on to drop his Scheme, or not to trouble the World farther with it, till he should be able to produce any such rational Evidence for it, I am verily perswaded that we should never hear any Thing more from him.

S E C T. V.

The supreme Power, according to the Constitution of Moses, lodged in the High-Priest, to whom the ultimate Appeal in Judgment was made, proved, against the Author's Exceptions and Evasions. The Oracle was the Priest; and the local, oracular, or tutelar God of Israel, who was a Friend to that Country, and an Enemy to all other Nations, could not be the true God. That the Revenues of the Priesthood in Egypt amount to at least an annual Rent upon all the Lands proved, and consequently that this must have been an unjust and tyrannical Constitution by the Author's own Concessions. The Pride and Vanity of this Nation in imagining that all Truth and Righteousness must be derived from them to other Nations, perfectly enthusiastic and groundless. No other Nation ever received the Worship of the true God upon the Motives of a Resurrection, and a future State from this Nation; but, on the contrary, the Jews themselves received these Doctrines and future Sanctions from the Persians, after the Rise of that Monarchy.

THUS far I think I have fairly set aside all this Author's Pretensions to Revelation above Reason, or to any Religion different from

from the eternal, immutable Religion of God and Nature, or that eternal, immutable Truth and Righteousness by which *Abraham, Noah, Enoch*, and all good Men from the beginning of the World had been justified and accepted of God, and which *Christ* came to restore, confirm, and propagate farther in the World. But we are now to enter upon the Business of the legal Priesthood and Sacrifices, and to enquire into the Nature, Grounds, and Reasons of it, and of what Use or Service it has been, or could be, to true Religion. And here as the Author has been indisputably tedious enough, I wish I could have found more Argument in proportion to the length of his Harangues.

This Author, *pag.* 179. denies the supreme Power in this Nation to have been in the High-Priest, and the Reason he gives for it is, that the Government was in the Hands of Judges, and the great Council or Sanhedrim, by the Law of *Moses*; and that at last their Kings could depose a High-Priest, and do what they thought fit. But surely he could not think that I supposed the Execution of the whole Government to be in the Priests, for the Truth is, that they were intirely exempted from all the Burden, Expence, or Hazard of Government; they paid no Taxes, but received all the Revenues of the Nation, they could not be obliged to civil Offices, nor to bear Arms, they were only Lords and Judges, and not common Subjects, and that the supreme Power was in the High-Priest, and the ultimate Appeal in Judgment

ment to him, by the Constitution of *Moses*, is so very evident, that this Writer could not deny it; but when they came to chuse a King, and put themselves under the regal Power after the Manner of other Nations, this was a fundamental Breach of the Constitution, and they were now no longer a Theocracy, as the Prophet told them, the God of *Israel* was now no longer the King of *Israel*, but they had deposed and dethroned their God, and made another King. It could now in Time to come be to no Purpose to consult the *Oracle*, or to ask Counsel of *God*, when the *High-Priest* himself was become a Subject, and the King would do what he pleased.

And this lets one into the whole Mystery, and shews wherein the Imposture or Cheat lay of God's being their King. It is very evident through the whole Story, that this People had a local, oracular, and tutelar God, who is called the God of *Israel*, as distinguished from the like residential Gods of *Egypt*, *Philistia*, *Zidon*, and other Nations; they had a God that resided in the Sanctuary, and sat in Judgment upon the Mercy-Seat, from whence they could hear his Voice, though they were not to see his Face, nor so much as to form in their Imaginations any Idea or Resemblance of him. This God after he had been dethroned and deposed as King, had a House built for him, where he dwelt 450 Years without being ever consulted or advised with, and then was burnt in his own Palace by the idolatrous *Babylonians*. This was
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the God for whom the Priesthood was instituted, to whom the Sacrifices were offered, and who was to be appeased and pacified with the Blood of Beasts ; but to suppose and affirm all, or any Thing of this of the true God, must be equally absurd and blasphemous. It is very plain to me, that *Moses* only refined upon the Superstition of *Egypt* and other Nations, he took them off from the gross Idolatry of Image-Worship, and brought them to the Notion of the Unity, Spirituality, and Invisibilty of the true God ; but then his making the true God only the residential, tutelar God of that Country, and his instituting a Priesthood and Sacrifices to him in Imitation of the Heathens, is a plain Proof that he could not entirely bring them off from their old Superstition and Idolatry. And as he could not do this, he made the best of it, took an Occasion from it to settle the Government, with a vast Revenue, in his own Tribe and Family ; and this was surely making the best of a bad Matter.

This Writer's Pretence that I had asserted, that the *Levites* were exempted by Law from the common Jurisdiction of the Law, and what he says upon it, *pag.* 180—182, is nothing but Forgery and Abuse ; the meanest of them had greater legal Privileges than even the Princes of the other Tribes, such as I have mentioned above ; and as to the common Jurisdiction of the Law in criminal Cases, they might easily evade it, considering the special Favour they must always have at Court, which

was entirely *Levitical*, and that they had been, by the very Constitution, placed and dispersed about as Spies and Informers all over the Kingdom; so that a Man had better have forgiven Murder than affront a *Levite*. Pag. 182. this admirable Writer has a very extraordinary Paragraph which I shall transcribe, to let the Reader see his uncommon *Talents*.

“ As to their Church-Revenues, if he could
 “ prove, as he says, he easily could, *That they*
 “ *had full twenty Shillings in the Pound upon*
 “ *all the Lands of Israel*, he might justly say,
 “ *that they drained all the Treasures of the*
 “ *Kingdom into the Church*; but a wild Assertion as this deserves no Answer, and only
 “ shews that this Writer throws out any Thing
 “ at random, by which he may vent his
 “ Spleen against the Priests, without being at
 “ all solicitous whether it be agreeable to Truth
 “ or Decency.” One may see by this, that the Author never rented an Estate himself and paid the Rent. But why may not a whole Nation of Tenants live at a rack Rent, as well as so great a Part of this and other Nations do now? Every rented Estate in Land ought to make three annual Rents, or otherwise the Tenant could not live and maintain a Family out of it, after he has defraided all the Charge and Expence of Tillage, and paid his Rent; but this vast Revenue to the Priests was mostly squeezed out of the Sweat and Labour of the Poor; and since this Author has made so fair a Concession, I shall attempt for once to prove
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that it could not amount by Law to less than an annual Rent upon the Lands, besides what the Priests and Levites might extort by the Power and Privileges granted them.

In the first Place then, the Priesthood had a Tenth of all the original natural Produce of the Soil, in Corn, Wine, Oil, Fruits, &c. before the Residue could be put to any other Use for Man or Beast; and as this Tenth was neat, and free from Labour and Expence in Cultivation and Tillage, it must have been at least three Tenths of the annual Rent of the Land; and all this must be taken in Kind, and without any Composition of a *Modus*, which is now very common with us. After this had been taken away, the Priesthood had a Tenth of all the Beasts, clean or unclean, and the First-born of all Beasts, which I shall put as a Tenth more; though it might be easily proved that this must have much exceeded a Tenth, but I shall reckon them both as two Tenths or a Fifth. Now since the Stock upon a landed Estate must, upon an Average, amount to at least two annual Rents, a fifth of this will be two Fifths or four Tenths of the annual Rent, which with the other three make seven Tenths; besides this the Tribe of *Levi* had a very considerable Share of the Cities, Towns, Villages, and Lands themselves, which by computing from the Places given and allotted to them by Law, would seem to amount to a seventh Part at least of the whole Country, but I shall put it only at a Tenth; and this, with what has
been

been computed before, will make eight Tenths of annual Rent; besides this, the stated legal Fees upon several Occasions were very extraordinary; as for a Woman after lying-in, and when she came to be churched, for Persons that had been cured of any foul Disease, and many other Instances, too long to be enumerated here; and in any such Cases, if a Lamb of a Year old had been ordered, and the Person could not give it, or was not worth it, they must give a Couple of Turtles, two young Pigeons, a tenth-deal of Flower, or what they could, if ever so little; so that if a Man was poor, the Priest would take all, and could have no more; but then the occasional Fines for legal accidental Uncleanneſſes, which might be unavoidable, and almost innumerable, can be reduced to no certain Calculation at all, especially as the *Levites* had been so commodiously situated and dispersed all over the Country, and mixed with every Tribe to observe and give in their Informations in all such Cases, which must have put it in their Power to have ruined any Family that had not entertained and treated them well: But besides all these Dues and Fines to be paid in Kind, there was a very great and enormous Poll-Tax laid upon the whole Nation, and to be paid in Money; every Male from 20 to 60 was to pay half a Shekel three Times a Year, when they went up to the Sanctuary; and here the poorest Man was rated as high as the richest, and no Abatement to be made on Account of Circumstances;

cumstances; at the same Time no Man was to appear before the *Lord*, the *Priest*, empty handed, but every one was to bring his Offering or Present with him, which, besides the loss of Time and Hinderance of Labour, could not amount to much less than what was to be paid in Money.

The Weight of a Shekel in Silver was not much more than half an Ounce Troy, or about two Shillings and Eight-pence of our Money, but the real Value of it cannot be estimated, without considering the Proportion of Money at that Time to other Things, which must be purchased with it, or exchanged for it; for every Body knows that Money itself is a Commodity, and may rise and fall at any Rate with Respect to other Things which are intrinsically necessary. Two Shekels was the Price fixed by the Law for the best fat sacrificial Sheep, 50 Shekels for a Man-slave, and 30 for a Woman, *Lev. xxvii.* and from many other Instances, which might be produced, the proportioned Value of the Shekel could not be less than 10 or 12 Shillings our Money, and I put it at 10. Now the Number of the People as taken by *Joab* in *David's* Time, did not amount to quite 160000, because the Tribe of *Benjamin* were not numbered, and *Joab* had no great Mind to go so far as he did, but the King would have it so. I shall therefore take the Number upon the whole as 160000, each of which paying half a Shekel three Times a Year, or a Shekel and half within

within the Year, would amount to 2400000 Shekels, 1200000 Pounds of our Money, at the present Rate and Value of Money, which is half as much again as our present Civil List; and including all the Presents and Offerings that must be brought at the same Time, it could not amount to less than two Millions Sterling, an immense Sum, besides all the rest, for a Country to pay that was never at the utmost, and in *David's* Time, above a fourth Part so big as *England*. And now I may leave any one to judge, whether all this put together, must not amount to much more than an annual Rent, and all this was to be paid by a People who had no Trade or Navigation, and nothing but their Land and Labour to depend on. Nay I may now leave it to this Writer himself, whether sufficient Care had not been taken under that Oeconomy to enrich the *Priesthood*, and impoverish the *People*. So great and unsupportable had been the Oppression, as complained of at the Death of *Solomon*, that ten of the twelve Tribes revolted at once, and never submitted to this Law and Priesthood more. And is not this a Constitution and State of Things to be contended for with so much Zeal, as the necessary Support and Foundation of our *holy Religion*? These sacerdotal Gentlemen shew plain enough where their Grief lies, and what the Sore is which will not bear touching; they seem to feel very sensibly every Wound that can be given to the *Jewish Priesthood*, and by a Sort of

of sympathetic Communication derive the Pain to themselves.

The Author goes on to plead strenuously for the Reasonableness and Necessity of a sufficient Maintenance to be settled upon the Tribe of *Levi*, who were appointed and set apart to instruct the People in the Law. I think I have proved that they had a sufficient and more than a reasonable Maintenance settled upon them, and I do not doubt, but they instructed the People in the Law of Tithes, Sacrifices, and Church-Dues; but if ever they instructed them in the Moral Law, they had either very dull and unapt Scholars, or else they had their Maintenance but to little Purpose. But the Author pleads for this enormous Church-Constitution, as if he was suing for his own Maintenance. I am entirely of *St Paul's* Mind, that they who preach the Gospel ought to live of the Gospel, or that they who by good Reasonings, Exhortations, and an exemplary instructive Life, endeavour to promote Peace and Charity, Truth and Righteousness, in the World, ought to be highly esteemed; but I believe he would not think it reasonable that 25 Millions *per annum* should be settled upon the *English* Clergy, which is about an annual Rent of the Lands, and this would be vastly more than their Due, if one might judge from their own Estimate, and conclude that they deserve just so much, and no more than they would give to a Substitute, or Delegate, to discharge the Duty for them; which I have heard some Gentlemen say is the best

best and the only true Rule of judging in such a Case. But a little Warmth for a necessary Maintenance is a very excusable Part of human Indigence and Frailty.

Page 190—200, the Author makes several Observations concerning the Nature, End, and Use of *Expiatory Sacrifices* under the Law; but from all that he has said, I cannot for my Life see, that any Thing was forgiven by that Law, otherwise than by suffering the Penalty prescribed, and thereby satisfying the Law itself; and this was the Difficulty I had urged, that there could be no Pardon, where no Punishment or legal Demand is remitted; but of this he has not been able to give a single Instance, as the Reader will see by turning over the Pages which I have referred to; and as to my own part, I am willing to save myself as much Trouble as possible, and by this the Author can lose nothing.

I had frequently observed and urged, that *Moses* had given his whole Law, both moral and ritual, as merely *positive*, or an express Declaration of Will and Pleasure, which was all, one as much as the other, to be taken upon the Credit of his Miracles and immediate Inter-course with God. The Author spends his whole seventh Chapter upon this, without contradicting me in any one particular Instance. He observes, that both *Moses* and the Prophets often urge the Reasonableness and Fitness of the Moral Law, and they could not do otherwise as Prophets and Preachers of Righteousness; but

but neither did *Moses* or the Prophets ever thus press or urge Obedience to the ritual Law from the Reasonableness or Fitness of Things, or from the Justice and Equity of the Ways of God. The ritual Law could bear no such Argument, nor was it ever urged for it; but as it is the natural Consequence of *Superstition* to set aside *Religion*, and of outward *Rights and Ceremonies*, enjoined as the Will of God, to destroy *Morality*, so it happened with this People; and just so it has fared with all other Nations, so far as *Superstition* has been mistaken for *Religion*, and *spiritual Purity* confounded with *carnal Hypocrisy*. But he here takes some Pains to justify the *Jews* as to their Wisdom and Morality, against several Things which I had urged from their own most celebrated Prophets or Preachers of Righteousness. He thinks what I have said bears too hard upon them as a Nation; but their own Prophets, in their pathetic Declamations against them, speak of the Nation, or People in general, as most infamously wicked; and therefore I presume the Corruption was general, and the Charge was national, though not inclusive of every individual, or all the Members of the Society without Exception. *Their Rulers judged for Reward, their Priests preached for Hire, and their Prophets prophesied for Money.* This Author seems to have no Notion of any Nation upon Earth that worshipped the true God but the *Jews*; from whence it is plain, that he has never read the History of the *Medes* and *Persians*

Persians in Dr Hyde de Relig. Vet. *Persar*. These were two mighty Nations, and the latter of them governed all *Asia* for upwards of 200 Years, and they had never from the very first Records of Time fallen into the *Sabean* Superstition of worshipping Idols and tutelar Gods; they had always worshipped the one true God, and him alone, without Temples or Images; but *Zoroaster* indeed introduced Temples with sacred Fire in them, after the Manner of the *Jews*, and formed their outward Discipline and Priesthood much after the *Mosaic* Model, which was a Corruption rather than a Reformation in the *Persian* Religion. It was while the *Jews* were subject to this People, which was from the Year before Christ 538 to 331, that they entirely quitted their Idolatry, and received juster Notions of God and Providence than they had ever had before, as they took their Notions of the Resurrection of the Body, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments from them. From this Time the *Jewish* Books are full of this Religion, which had never been understood or taught among them before. When the *Persians* came to govern *Asia*, they destroyed all the Temples of the antient *Egyptians*, *Assyrians*, and *Babylonians*, and had purged *Asia* of Idolatry, till the *Greek* Conquest, under *Alexander* the Great, brought it all in again, and restored all the antient *Egyptian* Gods. I have said thus much to give this Author an Occasion for farther Enquiry; and then he will find that the greater Light of the *Jews*

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in After-ages, and their juster Notions of God, Providence, Religion, and a future State, were owing not to *Moses*, but to *Zoroaster* and the *Persians*; and for this one need only appeal to the second Book of *Esdra*s, written about 400 Years before Christ, in which the Doctrines of Providence, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, are as plainly and expressly delivered and taught as in the Gospel itself. But not to insist longer upon this, as I can see nothing in the Author's seventh Chapter, relating to the Ritual Law of *Moses*, but what has been abundantly considered and answered already, I shall pass it over.

S E C T. VI.

The Case of the Benjamites considered, who were cut off and destroyed by the Advice of the Oracle ; the Oracle proved to be the High-Priest himself, and the Author's Objections to it, shewn to be groundless, vain, and frivolous. The Case of the Academical Prophets, and the Evidence of Prophecy, farther considered, and what had been offered upon it, fully vindicated and supported. The persecuting Spirit of the Prophets, and the false Notions of Religion and Polity which they acted upon, farther cleared and justified. They were the true Occasion of the long War between the two Kingdoms, and justified Aſa in making an Alliance with the idolatrous Aramites, while they condemned Jehošaphat for making an Alliance with Ahab, though it was for their natural Defence, and the Safety of both their Kingdoms against a foreign idolatrous Power. That Samuel after the Death of Eli usurped the High-Priesthood, and acted as High-Priest in presiding in all the Sacrifices for at least 40 Years, or till Saul was confirmed in the Kingdom, and that before this Renewal of the Kingdom, Saul had lived a private Life, and kept no Court for 18 or 20 Years, proved against the Author's Exceptions and Cavils. Samuel being

I *dispossessed*

dispossessed of all Share in the Government, resolves upon the Destruction of Saul and his House. His Conduct hereupon. The Part that David was to act after Saul's long and glorious Successes. The Character of David as drawn from the History. His Hypocrisy, Treason, and Perjury, his Character of Saul when dead, compared with the Account given of him by David and the Prophets while living. What had been said of David in the Moral Philosopher, as to his uncovering himself in dancing shamefully, and as a Fool among the Women, justified from the Text against this Writer's Evasions.

I NOW come to the Author's eighth Chapter, in which he has attacked me upon several material Points, and therefore I shall the more particularly consider it. And here he first undertakes to justify the Conduct of the Oracle, or Priest, and the *Levite*, where a whole Tribe was cut off at once, Men, Women, and Children, excepting 600 Men who happened to save themselves by Flight. I pity any Man that must be put to any such Drudgery, but as he has undertaken it, I must attend him in it, and try the Strength of what he has said. I had supposed this Oracle to have been the ultimate Resort in Judgment, and that all Cases which could not otherwise be decided, were to be finally decided by the *God of Israel*, whose Voice could only come from this Oracle. That the High-Priest had the

Custody of this Oracle, and that the Oracle could in no Case be consulted without him, cannot be denied. But the Author pretends, that the Oracle was only to decide in public Matters of *Advice*, but not in *Matters of Judgment* between Man and Man. That the last Resort lay to the Oracle, *i. e.* to God, in *Causes of Judgment*, he says, *is a gross Mistake, either through Ignorance or Design. The Urim and Thummim was not established for deciding Causes in Judgment, which were decided in another Method; but for asking Counsel of God, and that not in private Affairs, but in Affairs relating to the Public, to the King, or some chief Governor, or the whole People of Israel.* The Author is very positive here, as much as if his Assertions were the express Words of Scripture. But who told him that the God of *Israel* was never to be ultimately appealed to in Causes of Judgment, where a Matter could not be otherwise decided? Or what *other Method* was there to be taken in such Cases? It is certain, that the ultimate Appeal was to the High-Priest in all Causes of Judgment, and why might he not consult the Oracle privately in private Affairs, and Matters of Judgment, as well as publickly in public Affairs? Would he make one believe, that God had appointed a Method to be consulted and advised in difficult Cases, and where there could be no other Decision, and yet that this must extend only to public Affairs, where the whole Nation were concerned, but not to any Causes of Right
and

and Wrong between the several Members of such a *Theocracy*? Upon this Supposition, God would have been only their Generalissimo, or chief Captain, to lead in and out their Armies, or advise them in what related to Peace and War, but not their King or supreme Governour to decide in Appeals of Judgment. In his marginal Note, *pag.* 221, he informs us, that the High-Priest could not consult the Oracle when he pleased, but only when the Oracle thought fit to be consulted and give Answers. But how he came to know that the High-Priest could not consult the Oracle when he pleased, I cannot imagine. I am sure he can produce no good Authority for it, and I believe no Authority at all but his own. But, he says, we have a plain Instance of it in *Saul*, *who could obtain no Answer from God by Urim, though he earnestly desired it.* He should have said, that the *High-Priest* earnestly desired this on *Saul's* Account, and that God would not grant it on the Priest's Application. But it is no wonder, that neither the Priests nor the Prophets would give *Saul* any Advice, when they were all in *David's* Interest, and *Saul* could have no other Way of consulting with God but by them. But this Writer's great Zeal and Haste will not suffer him to consider the Things as they are, but catches at every Straw, or slight Appearance, as if he was sinking. But I hope I need say no more to prove, that the ultimate Appeal in Judgment must be to the *God* and *King* of *Israel*, while he was

locally residing among them, and in the sole Custody of the *High-Priest*.

The Author is very long and laborious upon the Story of the *Levite* and his Concubine, and what happened in Consequence of consulting the Oracle about it. He wiredraws every Thing, and endeavours to misrepresent every Circumstance of the Story. In the first Place, he would not have the Woman to be a Whore, because though the Word strictly and properly signifies *playing the Whore*, and has this Signification and Version in Abundance of Places, yet he has the Authority of *Grotius* for it, that it may signify an *Alienation of Affection*. No doubt of it, but a Woman's *playing the Whore* must suppose an *Alienation of Affection* from her Husband. But suppose this Man and Woman had been both innocent, and had received such Injury and Outrage without the least Occasion or Provocation given: Yet certainly the *Levite* did not take any lawful or justifiable Way to right himself and procure Satisfaction. He ought to have taken his Remedy at Law, which was open to him, and in which he might have expected the utmost Favour, as the supreme Power of the Nation was in his Tribe. But his raising all the twelve Tribes as he did to revenge his Quarrel, and bringing on such a bloody intestine War, as if he had no other Remedy, is what none but a *Levite* could have been capable of. But the Author says there was then no *Judge in Israel*, thereby intimating that this *Levite* could have had

saith, *The Tribe of Benjamin had Notice given them of the Fact, in the same Way that all the other Tribes knew it, and were summoned to come, as well as the other Tribes, to the General Assembly of the Nation.* But what Notice had they given them, or how were they summoned? Why, *we are expressly told, that the Children of Benjamin heard that the Children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.* Yes, they had heard their Destruction had been resolved upon, for an accidental Act committed in their City by Night, and while all sober People were within Doors, or a Bed. But was this a legal Summons, was this any Method of doing Justice before both Sides had been heard? But perhaps this Author may be only writing Booty, with a Design to betray the Cause which he would seem to espouse; or if he should be sincere in it, I am sure the Cause will have no Reason to thank him.

The Author says, it is very probable, that all this Uproar and Outrage in besetting the House, and abusing the Woman, happened in the *Evening*, he means *before Night*. But this is highly improbable, and will not at all consist with the Circumstances of the Story. It was late in the Evening before they came into the Town, and they had behaved so well in the Streets, that they had gathered a Mob about them, and no Body would take them in, or give them Lodging. It was after Sun-set when they came into the Town, but how long is not said. The *Levite* must have staid in the
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Street some considerable Time, before he could have made such particular Applications, as to know that no Man would take him into his House. But perhaps the Crime was, that, after he had waited so long, no Body came to give him any particular Invitation to a Lodging, and for which, for any Thing that appears, they might have very good Reasons. But at last an *Ephraimite* returning from his Work, which must have been in the very Dusk of the Evening, this Stranger having a House in the Town, and hearing what happened to the Way-faring Man, how long he had waited, and understanding too that he was a *Levite*, took him in. After all this, at what Time of the Night is not said, but they drinking, carousing, and making their *Hearts merry*, and one may suppose too, without any Violence to the Story, that they were pretty loud and noisy in their Mirth, but so it was, that the House was beset by a Mob, *Men of Belial*, as they are called, who demanded the Man they had seen in the Streets. But however this be, it is plain that this revengeful Blood-sucker was resolved to make it a public national Quarrel, and to raise a War upon it, rather than take any peaceable legal Method for Redress. And the Way he contrived to exasperate the whole Nation, and set them all on Fire at once, was such as none but a *Levite* could have thought of; and when he comes to tell the Story to the whole People, assembled in Arms, he represents it with all the aggravating Circumstances possible, as if the chief Inhabitants

tants or Magistrates of the Town had been guilty of all this, and had raised a Mob of Ruffians and Villains upon him. But the Author, *page 229*, asks, *But why then did not the Benjamites come as well as the rest of the Tribes to the General Assembly of the Nation, to represent this, who they knew were met together to enquire into it?* They did not come, because they were never summoned to come, or to meet the other Tribes, while they were debating the Matter, and considering the Flame that had been kindled, they did not know but any of them that had gone to have confronted and contradicted the *Levite*, who had charged the Guilt upon the whole City, might have been put to the Sword, nay they had all the Reason in the World to expect this. Had the Army they met sent a Summons to the *Benjamites* to appear and answer to the Charge of the *Levite*, and promised them Protection in so doing, there would have been some Shew or Appearance of common Justice in the Case. But nothing of this is seen from first to last. But he goes on, *Why did they not shew a Disposition to give them up, if they could be found, and to use their best Diligence to find them out, and punish them?* But does this presuming *Priest-Defender* know that they did not, or is such a Supposition consistent with common Sense, or even with human Nature? Can it be supposed that a whole City would chuse rather to be put to the Sword, than give up a few such infamous Rioters, had they known them, or could have proved

proved it upon them, and that the whole Tribe through all their Towns and Cities would have joined with them, and supported them in this? This was the Charge indeed of the villanous *Levite*, but the *Benjamites* had never an Opportunity given to confront him, and to clear themselves, nor Time to find out and punish the guilty Persons, if they could have done it at all. But they must be given up immediately and upon Demand. That they might have done it, is presumed indeed, but had it been capable of Proof, there would have been a fair Hearing and Enquiry upon it, which was never granted or proposed. Who but such a Writer as this, can imagine that a whole Tribe would chuse to be cut in Pieces, and totally extirpated, rather than make Satisfaction for the Life of one Woman, if any such Satisfaction could have been accepted? It is very plain from the whole Story, that it was not so much the Injury done, as the Person to whom it was done, that was the great unpardonable Aggravation of the Crime. And that an Example must be made to the Terror of all future Generations, how any one should ever dare to offer the least Slight or Affront to a *Levite*. He goes on; *This no doubt would have satisfied their Brethren, who sufficiently shewed how willing they were to accept Satisfaction in a reasonable Way, and how loth to break with them.* Yes, doubtless they sufficiently shewed this, when the very first reasonable Demand they made was with an Army of four hundred thousand Men, and
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this Demand was for a present immediate Surrender of the Criminals, whether it could be done or not. But surely this Writer, though a good *Advocate*, is not a very *reasonable Adversary*; and I fancy he would not talk quite as he does, if he did not apprehend his priestly Oracle to be in some Danger. What he offers farther to this Purpose, proceeds upon the same wild Supposition, that a whole City and Tribe would chuse utter Destruction, by engaging with 26000 against 400000, rather than make any reasonable Satisfaction in their Power for the Loss of a single Life, and some Slight shewn to a private Man.

But let us now see how he brings off the Oracle. He has so effectually vindicated this bloody Outrage against *Benjamin*, that there can be no doubt but he will justify the *Oracle* as well. He thinks this War cannot be charged upon the Oracle, who did not advise to it at first, that having been resolved upon before. When they asked Advice for the first Time, it was not whether they should undertake the War or not, but which of the Tribes should go up first, so as to take the Front and chief Command of the Army, and here *Judah* was ordered to go up first. Now every one must see, that this directing the Order of Battle by the Oracle, was approving the War, if he had not set them upon it at first. But after they had been beaten back that Day with the Loss of 20000 Men, they put the Question to the Oracle, Whether they should continue the War or not;

not; for this great Defeat seemed to be a plain Indication of Providence that the Cause was not just. But they were now ordered to go up again, in which second Attack they were repulsed again with the Loss of 18000 more. In those two Battles the *Benjamites* had slain more of their Enemies than their own whole Army amounted to, in the Proportion of 20 to 13, though they fought them at the Disadvantage of above 15 to 1, and a tenth Part of that vast revengeful Army had been cut off. This one would think must have been a sufficient Declaration from Providence of the Injustice of their Cause, and that they ought to have made Peace, had they not been under the Direction of a *false Oracle*. But now in the utmost Consternation and Distress they consult their priestly Oracle again, who, it is plain, had resolved upon the utter Destruction of the whole Tribe, and now puts them in the Way how to effect it, which they did accordingly. Now I would ask this Writer, whether his Oracle knew before-hand that the Tribes in the two first Attacks would be repulsed with the Loss of 40000 Men? And whether he had then thought of the Method he put them into at last for destroying the whole City by Fire and Sword? If he did not know and consider both these before, he could not be *infallible*; and if he did, he could not be *just*. And the whole Story evidently shews, that this Oracle was neither infallible, wise, nor just; since he might have brought the Matter to an Accommodation

Accommodation in a more peaceable and righteous Way, without the Effusion of so much Blood on his own Side, and the Loss of a whole Tribe. This Tribe had been always renowned as the bravest Men and best Soldiers in *Israel*, and they gave a Proof of it. And it is remarkable, that *Saul*, the first King of *Israel*, was chosen out of this Tribe, and out of this very Town. But this Writer's Shifts and Evasions to justify such unparalleled Outrage and Bloodshed, under the Direction of the Oracle, are so wretchedly mean and poor, that I am almost ashamed to mention them. If we ascribe all this to the High-Priest, there will be no Mystery at all, nor any Thing unaccountable in it, but to ascribe it immediately to God himself, must, I think, be not only highly absurd, but even blasphemous. I had said that the *Hebrew* Historian himself was so far from being satisfied of the Justice of all this, that he endeavours to excuse it by saying that there was then no King in *Israel*, but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes. And I had observed, that this could be no Excuse at all, because this whole Matter, with Regard to the War with the *Benjamites*, had been managed and carried on under the Direction of the Oracle. As to there being no King in *Israel*, this had been always the Case till *Saul's* Time, but still God was the King of *Israel*, and this God and King of *Israel* abode among them, and the High-Priest was his supreme Minister. But the *Hebrew* Historian does not pretend that
there

there was no Government or supreme Magistrate in *Israel*, which is what this Writer would make him say. And yet it is plain that the Historian condemns, or at least tries to excuse, what this Author labours to justify, which was not only the Destruction of *Jabesh-Gilead*, but the War with the *Benjamites*. The Destruction of *Jabesh* was the necessary Consequence of that War, and they were forced then to add one Iniquity to another, and to destroy a fine Town for their not coming to assist them in a Work which they themselves then repented of. But our Author's Conceit here is very peculiar, he says, *page 233*, That all this is *commonly and justly thought to have happened between the Death of Joshua and the Elders who survived him, and the Appointment of Judges, the first of which was Othniel*. But there was really no such Interval, nor is it thus commonly thought, or supposed, by any learned Men that I know of, or by any Man acquainted with the present State of Chronology. It is now *commonly thought*, that the several Intervals of Servitude mentioned in the Book of *Judges*, must be included in the Reigns of the *Judges* themselves, or otherwise it would be impossible to reconcile any Part of the Biblical Chronology during that Time. But the plain Truth of the Matter was, That this revengeful, implacable *Levite*, by the Method he took, had fired and inflamed the whole Nation, and raised them into a most outrageous, ungovernable Mob, without any common Head or Leader. And
this

this being done, no Judge or supreme Commander whatever could stop the Violence and Impetuosity of the People, when they had thus thrown off all Order and Government, and taken the Law into their own Hands. And yet in this very Case, the High-Priest animated and loo'd them on, and put them in a Method of effecting the bloody Work they were come about. I say, the *High-Priest*; for to conceive such Advice to come immediately from God himself, would be a most horrible and shocking Supposition; and yet this Writer seems readily disposed to give up all the natural and moral Perfections of the Deity, for the Sake of the *Mosaic* Priesthood and Sacrifices. Whether this be the Author's *holy Religion*, or *deep Hypocrisy*, I shall not take upon me to say; but surely Christianity must be well supported, and shine forth with all the Beauties of Holiness, while it has such Advocates and Defenders.

The Author next comes to consider what I had said about the Order of Academical Prophets, or Spiritual Scholastics, instituted by *Samuel*. He says, page 137, *If he intends by this to insinuate, that there were no Prophets before, it is a great Mistake, as appears from several Instances of Scripture.* But he must know that I could intend to insinuate no such Thing, since I had owned the contrary. God had all along raised up Prophets, on extraordinary Occasions, without any Thing of Academical Learning, or School-Divinity. And thus he
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raised up *Amos* under that very learned Dispensation, as he did *Daniel* and *Esdras* afterwards, when that Academic Order had been entirely broke and dissolved. But this was the first Order of Academical Prophets, or School-Divines, and the first regular Society of Monks, or religious Recluses, that we any where meet with, and perhaps the first in the World. Their Order was hereditary, for the Sons of the Prophets were Prophets, and intituled to their Commons upon the School-Foundations. Yet this Order or Office was not exclusive of others, who might be received and admitted, if regularly approved of by the Society. And even *Saul* himself was twice like to have been made a Prophet against his Will, which became a common Jest and Proverb among the People.

The first great Foundation of this Kind had been settled and endowed by *Samuel* himself at *Naioth*, but afterwards there were several other such Schools set up in different Parts of the Nation. I suppose those Schools were resorted to as a Sort of Churches or Oratories, before Synagogues had been introduced and settled, which was not till after the *Babylonish* Captivity, when the Schools of the Prophets had been all demolished and set aside. But what this Author seems to imagine, that these Schools of the Prophets were public Seminaries of Learning, like our Universities and Academies now, is a mere Fiction. The prophetic Order was a separate distinct Society, who led a monastic Life, and never concerned themselves with the

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common Business, Trades, or Professions of other Men. The Prophets were not Professors of Divinity, Law, or Physic, so as to teach their Arts and Sciences to others who were not of their own Order and Society. They must then soon have had Schools set up against them, and one Order distinguished from, and contending with, another, which we nowhere find. But the Prophets were certainly an Order of Men better united, and never made their Learning common and popular. This must have soon exposed the whole Art, blown up the Order, and put an End to the Society. They might keep up public Oratories in their Schools, as I suppose they did, for instructing the People, and keeping them as much as they could to the Moral Law. They inveighed very much against the too great Stress laid upon the Ritual Law, and the unreasonable Attachment of the People to their Priests and Sacrifices. This we find them very much insisting on, in those Writings and Memoirs of their Lives still remaining and transmitted to us. This seems to have been the great and main Design of their Institution, and had they kept to this, and not intermeddled too much in State-Affairs, and taken upon them to dispose of the Crown, and to raise popular Tumults and Rebellions as often as a King did not please them, they might have been a very useful Order, and kept their Interest longer both with Prince and People. But in this *Samuel*, their great Founder, had led the Way, and they could do nothing of this Kind

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without an Example. The great Pretence for this was *rooting out Idolatry*, which they knew no effectual Way of doing, but by Fire and Sword, and yet they could never find a King to their Purpose; but when they had got rid of one King by a *Revelation* from God, the next was rather worse, and all their Politicks of this Kind were continually defeated.

But before I come to this Author's particular Exceptions to what I had offered concerning Prophecy, I shall take leave to make two Remarks. The first is, That I had never denied the punctual circumstantial Accomplishment of some of the Prophecies; and therefore in what he offers with Regard to the exact Fulfilment of some of them, he is not in the least contradicting me, nor saying any Thing to the Argument, so far as I am at all concerned in it. All that I insisted on was, That this Spirit of Prophecy had no Connexion with the Moral Character, and that it could not prove either the Righteousness of the Prophet, or the Truth of his Religion. But the other general Observation I would make is, That it is very difficult, if not impossible for us, now to distinguish what was really prophetic in those Writings, from what is barely historical. It is well known to the Learned, that most or all of those Books have been revised and altered by after-Editors, who took the Liberty to add and supply what they thought fit; and therefore they might sometimes supply the particular Times and Circumstances in Prophecies, which

at first had been delivered only in general. The Prophecy of *Isaiab*, concerning the *Assyrian* Captivity, was of a Thing which happened in his own Time, and above 30 Years before his Death; and the Prophecy in *Ezekiel* of the 390 Years between the Revolt of the Tribes and the Destruction of the Temple was then expired, and God had never told this Prophet, or any other, that the Time would be just 390 Years, till the *Babylonians* had actually besieged the City, and the Event was unavoidable.

But not to detain the Reader longer in Generals, I now come to the Author's particular Objections. From page 245—254, he gives many Instances of Prophecies which he thinks were exactly fulfilled; but as this is nothing at all to the Purpose against me, I shall let it pass. At the close of this Chapter, he runs into an Harangue of four or five Pages about true and false Prophets. The Prophets were a regular formed Society, instituted by *Samuel*, who were to subsist and hold together by their own Laws and Constitutions, as the Priesthood had been instituted by *Moses*; and while they continued in the same Society and Order, without being deposed or expelled by their own Laws and original Constitution, they were true Prophets, or Prophets of the Lord, as much as the Priests were *Priests of the Lord*, though yet either one or the other might be very bad Men; and the 400 Prophets in *Ahab's* Time are called Prophets of the Lord, and *Jehosaphat* asks him, whether he had never
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another *Prophet of the Lord*; they are indeed called *Abab's* Prophets too, because they were all his Subjects, and *Micajah* was as much *Abab's* Prophet as any of the rest. But this Author will not have them to be *true Prophets*, or *Prophets of the Lord*, unless their Predictions come to pass. But I should think that a wicked Priest must be a Priest, and may be a Priest of the *Lord*, as well as of *Baal*. But by the Author's Rule was not *Nathan* a false Prophet, when he prophesied the Perpetuity of *David's* Kingdom, the far greater Part of which revolted the very next Generation, and never returned to their Obedience more? But he will say that Prophecy was conditional, because I had said it in a Joke, that this as well as most of the other Prophecies were conditional. But surely a conditional *Prophecy* is as great a Mystery as an absolute or unconditional *Covenant*, and yet our systematical Writers must suppose and maintain both. *Moses* indeed had given a Rule whereby to know whether the Lord had spoken to a Prophet or not, and that was whether the Thing did or did not come to pass; and if it did not come to pass, the Prophet was to be put to Death. Had this Law been executed in *Abab's* Time, it might have spared the Queen's Trouble and the King's Life, since every one of those Prophets of the Lord, excepting only one Man, ought to have been put to Death by their own Law, as Impostors and Forgers of a Commission from God. But the Author here grants as much in Effect as I had

asserted or intended, that most of those regular authorized *Prophets of the Lord*, were false Prophets with Regard to their Predictions, and that they give us no Rule to distinguish their *Prophecies* from their *Preachings*. And indeed it seems to me, that those Prophets had no certain Criterion themselves, whereby to know whether their Vision was from the Lord, or only a Delusion. What could the King and People think at the *Babylonish* Captivity, when *Jeremiah* and *Hananiah* prophesied so vehemently one against another, declaring with the utmost Assurance, in the Name of the Lord, quite contrary Things? It was this Confusion and Opposition of the Prophets among themselves that at last set them all aside; since the People could have no Rule to judge by, and every one of them was equally a true Prophet, till the Event proved the contrary; and they did nothing by all their Pretensions to supernatural Light, but divide and distract the Nation.

The Author in his 9th Chapter pursues the Business of Prophecy, and undertakes to free the Prophets from the Charge of acting upon the Principles of Persecution, and embroiling the State about Religion, which, as they thought, could only be effectually secured by Compulsion and Force of Arms. The great and constant Ground of Quarrel between the Author and me is this, That I cannot believe the Infallibility of the *Hebrew* Historians, or any historical Infallibility which he cannot
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prove; and that I dislike the Conduct of the Prophets, in the violent and forcible Methods they took to secure the Worship of the true God, which he cannot *justify*. If he could prove the first of these, and justify the latter, this Controversy would be at an End, for I should never struggle against Light and Conviction. But the first of these, the *Infallibility* of the *Historians*, he has not so much as attempted to prove; and what he has here offered in Justification of the latter, I must now examine. He all along, in a very warm and angry Way, represents it as a great Inconsistency and Self-contradiction in me, that after I had approved of the prophetic Institution, on its original Plan and main Design, I should yet blame the Conduct of the Prophets afterwards for intermeddling so much in State-Matters, turning Politicians, and by their pretended new Light keep the Nation continually in a Flame; as if one might not approve of and admire the original Institution of the Christian Ministry, as to its first Intention and Design, and then Censure, and condemn the gross Corruptions and Abuses of this Order in all Parts of Christendom for 1600 Years back. This is all the Inconsistency he can charge me with; but when the Argument fails him he is still angry with me, though he should rather blame the Argument itself, and cry out, *O Argument, Argument, the Lord rebuke thee!* This was very honest in the *Quaker*, but might not look triumphant in a *systematical Divine*; but might not the

Prophets be first intended as Preachers of Righteousness, and Examples of Mortification and Self-Denial, and yet afterwards turn gifted Politicians, and overthrow the State?

The Author, *page 266*, represents it as a most absurd and idle Supposition in me, that the Confirmation of *Saul* in the Kingdom, or his taking upon him the State and Dignity of King, was not till about 20 Years after he had been first anointed and made King by *Samuel*. I had confirmed this from Circumstances of the History which this Writer could not answer, and therefore he has said nothing to it, but he endeavours to set it aside by other Circumstances of the Story, and from the Authority of *Josephus*. I had observed, that when *Saul* was first anointed, he was a young Man in his Prime and Bloom, and this I proved from the express Words of Scripture, and the Testimony of *Josephus* too. *Saul* therefore at this Time could have had no Son, but what must have been a Child, Infant, or very young Lad. But when *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom upon his having raised the Siege of *Jabesh*, *Jonathan* was grown up and formed an able Soldier, and had the chief Command of the Army under the King. *Jonathan* therefore must be supposed in the Prime and Strength of his Years, as *Saul* himself was when he was first anointed King; but though our Author has been pleased to say nothing at all to this, I shall consider all that he has offered to the contrary. In the first Place then, he says, that *if I will govern my-*
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self by the Chronology of Josephus, the besieging of Jabesh-Gilead was but a Month after Saul's Inauguration at Mizpeh. But does this answer what I had offered from Scripture itself? Or will this Systematist stand to *Josephus* against the Bible? *Josephus* is the last Man whose Authority I should take in Chronology, and in this very Case he is guilty of a monstrous Absurdity, for he supposes the 40 Years of *Saul's* Reign, to have been 18 of them in *Samuel's* Life-time, and 22 after his Death; at which rate, *David* could have been but six Years old at most when *Samuel* died; but doubtless he mistook the 18 Years in which *Samuel* governed jointly with *Saul*, for the whole Time of *Samuel's* Life; and confounded the 22 Years afterwards in which *Saul* had reigned alone, without any Authority in *Samuel*, with the Time which he survived *Samuel*, which could not have been more than two Years. And *Josephus* himself has given us a sufficient Reason why we ought not to trust him in Chronology; for he informs us, that he had faithfully related the History of their Nation just as he found it in the *Hebrew* Books without any Alteration; and therefore he must necessarily contradict himself, as often as he transcribes or copies after Authors, who were not consistent with one another. But it seems this Confirmation of *Saul* in the Kingdom, could have been but a very short Time after the first Inauguration; because the War they were threatened with from the *Ammonites*, is the very Reason given for making

Saul

Saul King, and the Siege of Jabesh-Gilead, the very next Transaction recorded after Saul had been anointed. But it is well known that the *Hebrew* Historians, who only give us some short Memoirs and Abstracts of the principal Transactions, very often mention Things immediately one after another, which had been done 20 or 30 Years, and sometimes two or three Generations apart, where nothing extraordinary or very remarkable had happened in the Interval. This is so very common with them, that surely this learned Writer cannot want Instances of it; they might have been threatened with a War from the *Ammonites*, and might have been actually at War with that Nation up and down 20 or 30 Years before the Siege of *Jabesh*, and before *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom, and *Samuel* quite set aside in the Government. When *Saul* was first anointed, we hear nothing of *Samuel's* great Age, or of his Disposition to retire from public Business, but when *Saul* had been confirmed in the Kingdom, and took upon him the State and Dignity of a King, and came to keep two Courts, one for himself, and the other for *Jonathan*, who had 1000 Men allowed him for his constant Guards and Attendants; at this Time, I say, *Samuel* represents himself as grown very old, and takes his solemn Leave of them as to the Affairs of the Government. And had this been at *Saul's* first Inauguration, or 40 Years before his Death, it is not probable that *Samuel* should have lived 38 or 39 Years longer, or within a Year

Year or two of *Saul's* Death, as he must have done.

By the Constitution of this Law, the High-Priest was to keep a more splendid and numerous Court than any Prince in the World. Into this Court was to be paid all the Tenth, Dues, Offerings, Forfeitures, Deodands, &c. as prescribed by the Law ; and this, as I have proved, arose to at least an annual Rack-Rent upon the Lands, which must have amounted to about a third Part of the whole Produce of the Land, in Corn, Wine, Oil, Cattle, &c. and was pretty near the Case, as it stood in *Egypt*, from whence this Lawgiver had took his Plan. This being the Case, it was impossible that any other public, splendid, or numerous Court should be kept by any Revenues from the People, without seizing upon and detaining a considerable Part of the legal Rights and Dues of the Priesthood ; and therefore the Judges were to live only as private Men, unless when they headed the Armies, and went in and out before the whole People : They were to keep no Court at any public Expence, nor were there any Taxes or Contributions from the People allotted them by Law. *Gideon* was taken from his threshing to judge *Israel* ; and when he had subdued the *Midianites*, he returned to his threshing again : and *Deborah*, the Prophetess, while the People resorted to her for Judgment, lived under a Palm-Tree in Mount *Ephraim*.

Moses foresaw that this People might, some Time or other, chuse a King, or chief Commander,

mander, and possibly settle the Office or Dignity in a particular Family. But then he intended that every such King should conform himself exactly to the Law; in which Case he could have kept no Court at any public Expence, for which no legal Provision had been made; and this Law was unalterable, and no new Law could be added to it afterward. The Kings therefore, had they not broke in upon the fundamental Constitution of the Law, must have lived privately, as the Judges had done before, or quite exhausted and impoverished the Nation. And such was *Saul's* Case for the first eighteen or twenty Years of his Reign, while the Prophet, who kept no Court at any public Expence, managed all the public Affairs of the Government in time of Peace. But when *Saul* came to take upon him the State and Dignity of a King, and to keep separate, sumptuous, and numerous Courts of his own, as did all the Kings after him; it is evident that a great Part of the legal Revenues, which had been before paid in to the Court of the Lord, must now be taken to support the King's Court; the supreme Power was now no longer in the Tribe of *Levi*, the High-Priest was become a Subject, and the God of *Israel* deposed and set aside from being King of *Israel*. And I have shewn already, that the local, oracular, tutelar God of *Israel*, who was always supposed to reside in the Sanctuary in the Custody of the High-Priest, was a mere Cheat, and as much
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an Idol, as the tutelar oracular and residential Gods of *Egypt* and other Nations.

But this vast Revolution in the Government did not affect the Priesthood in *David's* Time, who was so far from lessening their Revenues that he added to them, and by his vast Successes in all his Wars drew in Wealth and Treasure enough to support his splendid Court, and lay up immense Treasures besides for the building the Temple which he had projected ; the Plan of which he gave to *Solomon* who was to build this glorious Edifice. But *Solomon*, in perfecting this and his other sumptuous Structures, was forced to lay such Taxes and Burdens upon the People, which, together with the Weight of the Priesthood, became unsupportable. And therefore this great and wise King, in his own Time, was forced to dispense with the Law of Sacrifices and Church Dues, as they had been enjoined by the Law of *Moses*, and to indulge the People in chusing their own Priests, and directing their Sacrifices, and reducing their Expences that way as they thought fit.

But this Indulgence of *Solomon* made the latter Part of his Reign very uneasy : For the Prophets, joining with the deserted Priests, formed Plots and Conspiracies against the King, to oblige him, if possible, to revoke his Indulgence and Toleration, and to bring back the People to the legal Priesthood. But this he would never do, for the Priests of the Lord were now become *Solomon's* Priests, and he could manage them as he pleased. But on the
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Death of *Solomon*, the People being resolved effectually to secure an Exception from the Burden of the legal Priesthood, which, together with the Weight of the Crown, could be no longer born, and not being able to obtain any such Promise or Security from *Rehoboam*, *Solomon's* Son and Successor; not being able, I say, to obtain this, ten of the twelve Tribes revolted at once under *Jeroboam*, and never submitted to that grievous Yoke of the *Mosaic* Priesthood more. Thus the Prophets, by joining with the Priests, and struggling to support this Part of the Law, made the Matter vastly worse, and still made it worse and worse in pursuing the same Point, from time to time, till they had lost all and had no other Game to play. This, I think, is a just and plain Account of the Matter as it stands in Fact, and as it must stand in all human Reason and Policy. But if our Author, thro' his systematical Spectacles, cannot see this in *School-Divinity*, I should advise him to lay aside those false Glasses in order to see Things as they are, and as they would appear to his own natural *Eye-sight*. But if he will not do this, and will still go on to confound *School-Divinity* with *Christianity*, I verily believe that his *Spectacle-Religion* must, at last, give way to the true and *natural one*.

As to *Samuel's* usurping the High-Priesthood from the Death of *Eli* till *Saul*, being confirmed in the Kingdom, put in *Ahia*, which I had asserted, this cautious Writer neither affirms nor denies it directly, but endeavours to evade it as
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what cannot be proved. He does not tell us who was the High-Priest during the Interval, or whether *Abia*, the great-grand-son of *Eli*, was his immediate Successor in the High-Priesthood; or whether there must have been a Vacancy of the High-Priesthood, and consequently of all Priesthood, for forty or fifty Years together. Such Questions might have puzzled his Divinity. But this is not all, for he cannot see any thing in the Bible, though ever so plain, but what he finds in his Systems, such is the Nature of the Glasses he makes use of: But let him only lay aside his Spectacles, and consult the following Texts; 1 *Sam.* vii. 9. ix. 12. x. 8, 11, 14, 15. When he has considered these Texts, let him tell what he thinks of *Samuel's* High-Priesthood, or whether there was then any other Priest above him, while he had all the Power of the Kingdom in his Hands. It is plain, from these Texts, that *Samuel* presided, and offered up all the Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings upon all great and public Solemnities; and, by the last Text quoted, *Samuel* officiated, upon that grand Occasion of all, when *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom, and took upon him the whole Power of the Government; but had *Samuel* acted only as a common Priest, or in the lowest Order of Priesthood, he must have usurped the Office as much as *Saul* did, for which he was to lose the Kingdom.

When *Saul* had taken upon him the whole Power of the Kingdom, and the Prophet had been thereby forced to quit all his Share of the Govern-

Government, the Succession in the High-Priesthood was left free and open in the legal Way, and then *Abia* came to it of course, and *Samuel* was obliged to quit all Pretensions to Priesthood. Now I had said a great deal to shew, that from the natural and obvious Construction of the Story, and as the Thing must be understood in any other Author, *Samuel*, from this very Time, plotted and contrived the Ruin of *Saul* and his Family, and took all the artful Methods in the World to bring it about; and I had said, that this Plot at last succeeded by a long Train of Fallhoods, Hypocrisy, Treason, and Rebellion, or Words to this Effect. And this must have been so, if we were to judge of Things in a natural Way, and understand this History as one would any other, where the holy Name of God might be thus abused, to countenance what must have been otherwise condemned as very inhuman and unrighteous. This Way the Author takes, and then falls foul upon me for not believing what he always supposes, but cannot prove. It is, I think, very plain, that when the Prophet found he could not absolutely govern the King, he immediately resolved upon his Destruction; and his Pretence to a Divine Commission for all that he did made the Matter still worse. From the time that *Saul* took upon him the whole Power of the Kingdom, he had a long Train of Victories and Successes; he freed the Country from the Devastations and Inroads of all the Nations round about that had ever given them any
Disturbance,

Disturbance, and never was any King better or more generally beloved by his People. When *David* first began his Rebellion, no Man of any Fortune or Credit would join him; none but a few ragged infamous Wretches, who could not pay their Debts, or who fled from Justice; and all such he received and protected against all Law and Right, and had made them up at last to the Number of 600 Men; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 2. When he came into *Philistia* he acted the same treacherous Part there that he had done in his own Country. No doubt but *David* was the most artful Dissembler that ever lived; soon after he came into *Philistia*, he had made *Achish*, King of *Gath*, believe, that he had entirely quitted the Interest of his own Country, and was ready to sacrifice his All, and do any thing in his Power, to serve the *Philistines*; and as he had a peculiar Way of ingratiating himself by cloathing all his Deceit with a most plausible Appearance of Sanctity, and solemn Appeals to the God of Heaven for his Truth and Integrity, the King of *Gath*, never having seen nor known such a Saint before, believed him, and gave him a whole Town, *Ziklag*, for him and his 600 Nonpareils. *David* having gained his Point, and secured himself in the Trust of the credulous King, got up one Day, and, with his Raggamuffins, went and destroyed all the South Coasts of *Philistia* towards *Egypt*, not leaving a Man to carry Tidings of what had been done; and when he came back, upon the King's asking him where they had been to

Day, told him, that they had been against the South Parts of *Judea*, and had cut them all off. All this *Achish* believed, for who could discredit such a solemn Swearer in the Name of the Lord, and a Man who was always ready to imprecate the most direful Vengeance upon himself, if he was not sincere? The *Philistines* now thought themselves pretty sure of *David*, for he had prevailed with them to raise a mighty Army against *Israel*, and offered to head their Forces. But this was not accepted, for the rest of the Princes of *Philistia* were not quite so blind as *Achish*, and blamed him for the Trust he had reposed in this artful Fugitive. However *David* had gained his Point, and raised a *Philistine* Army, which he thought would be sufficient to answer his Purpose, against his King and Country, and by cutting off *Saul* and his Family might give him a good Chance for the Kingdom: He therefore hastens into *Judea* a Day or two before the Army could come up; and *Jonathan* meeting him, with great Joy and the sincerest Friendship, congratulated his Success, and finding he must be now King, submitted to it, only desiring still to be his Friend and Favourite, and the second Man in the Kingdom; but *David* had now no farther Occasion for *Jonathan*, and therefore sent him away into the Army to join his Father, and two other Brothers, against the *Philistines*, and to fall with them; which happened according to his Wishes. And this Conduct towards *Jonathan* gives one a true Idea of the Sanctity and Fidelity of this

divine Hypocrite. After the *Israelite* Army had been totally routed, *Saul* and his Sons slain, and *David's* Wishes thus far crowned, he gives another flagrant Instance of his deep and most detestable Hypocrisy ; for he ordered the Messenger, who came to bring him the good News, and who might have expected a vast Reward, he ordered him, I say, to be slain, because he had dispatched the King, and put him out of Pain at his own earnest Request, while he lay dying and agonizing upon his own Sword. This Man had laid his Hands upon the *Lord's* anointed, for which he must die. And now this Mirror of Dissimulation, and true Original of religious Hypocrisy, breaks out into a most pathetic Lamentation for *Saul*, extols him to the Heavens, as the greatest *Hebrew* Worthy, and the most renowned Hero that ever lived, the Pride and Glory of his Country. O noble *Israel*, he is slain upon the high Places, how are the Mighty fallen ! tell it not in *Gath*, publish it not in the streets of *Askelon*, lest the Daughters of the *Philistines* rejoice, lest the uncircumcised be glad. Ye Mountains of *Gilboa*, upon you be neither Dew nor Rain, nor Fields of Offerings, for there the Shield of the Mighty is fallen, the Shield of *Saul*, as though he had not been anointed with Oil. The Bow of *Jonathan* that never turned back, neither did the Sword of *Saul* return empty from the Blood of the slain, and from the Fat of the mighty. *Saul* and *Jonathan* were lovely and pleasant in their Lives, and in their Death were they not divided ; they were swifter than Eagles, they were stronger

than Lions. Ye Daughters of Israel weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, and decked your Garments with Ornaments of Gold. How were the Mighty slain in the midst of Battle. O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high Places.— Thy Love to me was wonderful, passing the Love of Women; see 2 Sam. i. 19, &c. But, O Heavens! is human Nature capable of such Depths of Deceit? This is the Man, who, while he lived, despised the Prophets, slew the Priests, consulted with Demons and Witches, and was little better than the Devil himself. This is the Man betrayed and ruined by a revengeful Prophet, and treacherous, rebellious Son-in-law, the Man who had been pronounced from God unworthy of the Kingdom; who had invaded the Priest's Office, and for which both he and his Family had been most divinely doomed to Destruction: And, O *Jonathan!* let such Friendship never more fall into the Hands of such Perfidy. I have here given the Character of *Saul* from *David* himself, because I believe it is the justest that could be given, and is very poetically and beautifully drawn, and, considering the Hand it comes from, no one can doubt of its being genuine and authentic.

But before we pursue the History of *David*, it will be proper to look back a little, to the Time when *Saul* was hunting him from one Recess to another upon the Mountains, after he had begun the Rebellion, and appeared in open Arms against his King, his Father-in-law, and his Country. During this Time, the artful

Traitor had watched an Opportunity twice to get the King into his Power, while he was asleep, but surrounded with his Army and Guards; and this he improves afterward, when he came near enough to speak to *Saul*, as an evident Proof of his Innocency, and that he could have no Design upon his Life or Kingdom, since he did not kill him when he might have done it. The brave Prince, though too credulous, seems struck with this, professes his Sorrow that he had so much mistaken the Intentions of his dear Son *David*, and invites him to lay down his Arms, return to his Obedience, and come back again to his House; upon which he promises him a kind Reception, and to forgive all that was past: But *David* understood better Things, and had no such Game to play. But as to his Pretence of Innocency, because he had not killed the King, the Sophistry and Deceit of it is transparent; for, in the first place, it must have been a thousand to one, in such a Case, if the Murderer had escaped and got clear off without being discovered and taken. But in the next place, had he succeeded, it must have blown up the whole Plot, and *David* could never have come to the Crown. This mighty Revolution was to be brought about, in Appearance, purely by God and Providence: Righteous *David* was to have no hand in it, though *Samuel* had privately anointed him, and promised him the Kingdom before he was taken into *Saul's* Family: But this was to be kept as a deep Secret between the Prophet and

the Shepherd. If any Suspicions should arise, *David* was to purge himself by the most solemn Oaths, Protestations, and Imprecations of Vengeance, in the Name of God ; and this he punctually kept to, and gained his Point by it : But had he watched an Opportunity, and murdered the King privately, or ordered it to be done, the whole Plot must have broke out, and the whole Nation would have rise upon the Murderer and Traitor and stoned him. This is the Man who had no Views to the Kingdom, nor any the least Design upon the King's Life, when he only waited for an Opportunity to cut his Throat ! Was ever such Villainy ? Shall this Man reign over us ? Is this the solemn Swearer, the imprecating Vower, and Man of Integrity ? Away with him to the Devil, from whence he came.

When *Saul* spoke with *David* upon the Mountains, he intreated him that if he should succeed him in the Kingdom, he would shew Kindness to his Family, and spare them when they might be in his Power ; and *David* swore to him solemnly, in the Name of God, that he would do so : But how well he kept his Oath, or how religiously he broke it, we shall soon see. After the Death of *Saul*, *David* was presently made King of *Judah* in *Hebron* ; but he maintained a War for 7 or 8 Years after that against the House of *Saul*, for the whole Kingdom ; and this War was, doubtless, mere Providence, the pure Work of God, and *David* had no hand in it any more than he had had hitherto :

hitherto : But when he had succeeded in this, let us see how he treats *Saul's* Family after they were become his Subjects and Slaves. *Jonathan*, the Prince Royal, whom this artful Dissembler had betrayed and ruined, had one only Son left, whose Name was *Mephibosheth*. This Son of *Jonathan* *David* spared, and suffered him to enjoy his paternal Estate for some time, but took the first Opportunity to strip him of his Estate, and give it to a treacherous Servant. At the Time of *Abalom's* Rebellion, *Mephibosheth*, having been lame from his Youth, ordered his Servant *Ziba* to saddle his As, that he might go with the King over *Jordan*, who was then forced to fly from his rebel Son ; but his Servant deceived him, and went with the King without him. The poor Prince, grievously afflicted at this, kept himself in mourning, and neither washed nor shaved till the Rebellion had been suppressed by the Death of *Abalom*, and then he went to meet *David*, who was now returning again to *Jerusalem*. But in the mean while, this grateful Tyrant had given away his Estate to *Ziba*, the Prince's treacherous Servant, who had maliciously accused him for not coming to meet the King, after he had refused to saddle his As, and gone away without him. *Mephibosheth* represents this to *David*, in the most humble and moving Manner ; which had no other Effect upon this Pattern and Original of Ingratitude and Cruelty, but to draw this churlish Answer from him : *Why speakest thou any more to me of thy Matters, I have said, Thou*

and Ziba divide the Estate. Nay, said the unfortunate Prince, *let him take all, seeing my Lord the King is come home in Peace,* 2 Sam. xix. 24—30. *Poor Man!*—— This is the Son of the brave invincible *Jonathan*, whom this artful Traitor had deceived and ruined, now reduced to Charity and Insults at the Tyrant's Table. But this Man after God's own Heart, who did nothing but by Advice from the Lord, could not think himself safe, as long as any of *Saul's* Family or Descendants remained alive; for as he must be conscious of his own Falshood and Baseness, he was the most, of any Man alive, jealous and suspicious of all others. I had observed that *David*, during the Rebellion, had sworn solemnly to *Saul*, that when he came to the Kingdom he would spare his House or Seed, and shew Kindness to his Family. This was all that brave unhappy Prince had then to ask; and this the rebel Son and Traitor swore to him, 1 Sam. xxiv. 22, 23. But when *David* was now established in the Kingdom there happened a three Years Dearth, and God had, it seems, told him, that his sparing the House of *Saul* had been the Occasion of that Calamity; so that God now put him upon the most complicated Iniquity of Perjury, Cruelty, and Inhumanity, to crown all his other Deeds of Truth and Righteousness. *David* therefore now sends to the *Gibeonites*, and asks them what he should do for them, so as to make Atonement for the Injuries *Saul* had done them. They understood him very well, and told him
they

they should ask neither Silver nor Gold, but only *Saul's* Sons to be given up to them. This was readily complied with, and seven Sons of *Saul* given up, whom the *Gibeonites* hanged up all together. It is indeed said, *ver. 7.* that *David* spared *Mephibosheth*, because of an Oath that had been made to *Jonathan*; and he barely spared the Life of this Son of *Jonathan* after he had stript him of all, and put him out of a Condition ever to marry, or settle any Dowery. And thus did this Man after God's own Heart obey the Voice of the Lord, and stopt the Famine in the Land by Perjury and Murder.

As soon as this King came to the Throne, he made it his Business to care for and oblige the Priests and Prophets, to secure them in his Interest, and herein he succeeded so well, that he soon became the Idol of both, as he has been the Idol of all Priests and Prophets ever since. But these two Orders being thus settled in *David's* Interest, he could never want an Atonement for his Sins, nor an Historian to extol his Reign, and give his Vices the Gloss of Virtue.

Soon after *David* was made King of all *Israel*, he brought the Ark of God from the House of *Abinadab* to his own City, *Jerusalem*. Upon this Occasion they had a grand national Procession of both Sexes, such as could dress well. The King himself began this Procession in sacerdotal Robes; for having now the absolute Command of the whole Kingdom, and
his

his God in a Coffer, the *King* thought fit, upon such an Occasion, to turn himself into a *Priest*. But in the Heat of this Devotion, while *David* was *leaping and dancing before the Lord*, he threw back his *priestly Robes*, or threw them quite off, and uncovered himself before the Lord, and the Women, the *Daughters of his People, as a Fool uncovereth himself*. And this which the Queen saw from a Window, she charged him with, in Scorn and Contempt, and he could not deny it. But our admirable Author refers me to several Passages, to shew that *David* was covered all this while. These Places, how that he began the Procession in Priest Orders, but that he did not uncover himself afterward in the Heat of his Zeal, this *Deponent saith not*. I had made but a Jest of this at first, and ascribed it to the King's Zeal. But our Author has made a greater Jest of it, and will not believe the Queen's *Eye-sight*, though he knows it to be *Scripture*. But I shall only refer the Reader for this to *2 Sam. vi*.

Moses had left in solemn Charge, that this People should never make War with the *Edomites*, because *Edom* was their Brother; and in all the Wars of the *Judges*, while this People were continually conquered by, and enslaved to, some of the neighbouring Nations or other, as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Midianites*, &c. we do not find that they had any War with *Edom*, or that the *Idumeans* had ever attacked them, or joined in the Wars against them
with

with the other Nations. Yet as soon as *David* had an Opportunity, and in the midst of his rapid bloody Conquests, he destroyed this noble merchandizing Nation. He sawed them asunder, and left none of them, but what could save themselves by Flight, and such was the Slaughter in *Idumea*, that *Joab* was six Months in burying the Dead. And for this very Reason he was forbid to build the House which he had projected, a House for *God to dwell in*, because after he had been raised from the Dung-hil or *Sheep-fold*, he had been a *Man of Blood*, or a cruel relentless Tyrant.

This good King seems to have died as he lived, a Spectacle of Truth, Justice, and peculiar Sanctity. The 38th Psalm may be reckoned his last penitential Hymn, and he was then, I doubt not, a true Penitent. He describes, as his own Case, a Distemper which is now but too well known, especially in this great City. *O! Lord rebuke me not in thine Anger, neither chasten me in thy sore Displeasure. Thine Arrows stick in my Flesh, and thy Hand lieth upon me. There is no Soundness in my Flesh, because of thine Anger, neither is there Rest in my Bones, because of my Sin. Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, and as a weighty Burden they are too heavy for me. My Wounds are putrified and corrupt, because of my Foolishness. I am bowed and crooked, very sore, I go mourning all the Day, for my Reins are full of burning, and there is nothing sound in my Flesh. I am weakened and sore broken, I roar for the very Grief*
of

of my Heart.—My Lovers and my Friends keep out of my Plague, and my Kinsmen stand afar off. See *Psal.* xxxviii. As I take this to be *David's* last penitential Psalm, I shall leave our learned Author to publish a Volume of Sermons upon it, as he finds Occasion. But I hope he will not allegorize it all, and say, that this was the State not of his *Body* but *Soul*. This Sort of Lues is still contagious, and often epidemical in several Parts of the *Spanish West-Indies*, without any Thing of Venereal Contact: And any one that reads and considers the Account *Moses* has given of the *Plague of Leprosy*, must see that it was Venereal. In short, *David* was a Man of a very great and uncommon Genius in Poetry, Music, and the Art of Diffimulation; he was perfidious in his Friendship, and implacable in his Enmity, his Revenge was inexorable, his Amours base and shameless, and it may be truly said of him, that he never spared a Man in his Anger, nor a Woman in his Lust. He had nothing of the manly Bravery of a Soldier, but owed all his Victories and Successes to *Joab*; but under any Difficulties or Distress, discovered his own Fearfulness, Effeminacy, and Cowardise, to which his Cruelty was equal, whenever he had got an Enemy in his Power; and as all his Conquests had been very rapid and bloody, so after his Death they were as soon lost as they had been gained. In his highest Flights of Devotion, and in the Hymns which he composed and set to the Music of the Temple, he intersperses
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the most direful Curses and Imprecations of Vengeance upon his Enemies, and made his own Quarrel always the Cause of God, which shews the Rancour and Venom of his Soul, to have been equal to the Malignity of that Humour that preyed on his Body. That this was his uniform Character, I think, is very plain from the whole Course of the Story, and from every remarkable Transaction of his Reign. Our Author indeed gives this Prince a quite different Character, and throughout the greater Part of his 9th Chapter, extols him to the Skies, as the Mirror of Truth, Justice, and Piety. But his Character seems defective and suspicious in this, that it is not supported by any Facts, unless we must take *David's* own Word for it, and his solemn Protestations of his own Justice and Integrity, when some open notorious Piece of Wickedness had thrown him into a Fit of Devotion, of which his Elegy on *Saul*, among many others, is a remarkable Instance. I have been the more particular on *David's* Life and Character, because I find he is the *Saint-Errant* of spiritual Scholastics, and *School-Divinity*, it seems, cannot stand without him. But I hope to shew that *Christianity* can be no Loser by this.

S E C T. VII.

The Case of the Prophets farther considered, and the Author's pretended Vindication of their false Principles, and wrong Conduct in several Instances, exposed and confuted. A particular Account of the Civil Wars between the two Kingdoms, and how they were fomented and carried on.

THE Author in his tenth Chapter comes to examine the Account which I had given of the Prophets, and their Struggles all along to recover the revolted Tribes, and bring back the People to the legal Priesthood. But he does it in such a tedious Way of Pulpit-haranguing, that it is difficult to trace his Argument, or to find out where it is, that he would lay the Stress of it.

The Author, through this Chapter, labours to make his Reader believe that the *Prophets* were no *Politicians*, and that they had no Concern at all in any of the great Revolutions in the Kingdom, from the Revolt of the Ten Tribes to the *Assyrian* Captivity, any farther than by declaring to the People what they had received by immediate Inspiration from God. He has undertaken to defend *immediate Inspiration* against all the Principles of *human Policy*, the
visible

visible State of a Nation, and the necessary Reasons of State, which must in the natural Course of Things bring about such and such Revolutions. He can see nothing in Scripture, but through his Glasses, but could he lay aside these a little, and trust to his own natural Eyesight, I might have the less Trouble with him for the future.

How the State of the Kingdom stood during the Reign of *Solomon*, and at his Death, I have shewn already; and that the Burden of the legal Priesthood, together with the Weight of the Crown, could then no longer be born. For when the Church had an annual Rent, or a third Part of the whole Produce of the Lands by Law, and the King wanted another, it was impossible the People should live, but under the utmost Hardships and Distress. Such a Revolution therefore, at that Time, was unavoidable in the natural Course of Things, and either the priestly or regal Power must sink. This the Prophets knew, and therefore concerted the Revolution with *Jeroboam*, as I have shewn. They thought, no doubt, by this Means to bring back the Kingdom of *David* to the legal Constitution, and force them to submit themselves again to the *Mosaic* Priesthood; and therefore declared that this Revolt of the Kingdom was only to last for a Time, and then be restored to the same Family again. But in this they were mistaken, and were never able to bring it about, though they spared no Effusion of Royal Blood to that Purpose.

But

But I have set this Matter in so clear a Light already, that I dare trust the Reader with it, who can see without our Author's Glasses.

He denies that *Solomon* during his whole Reign was in Alliance with *Egypt*, though he had married the King's Daughter, and had all his Horses and Chariots from thence. And he might as well have denied that he was in Alliance with the *Zidonians*, who built the Temple, and manned his Fleets for him; or that he kept Peace and Alliance with all the Nations his Father had conquered, and suffered their Kings to be restored without ever fighting a Battle to retain any of those Conquests. But this Writer takes it as a general Rule to contradict me, and whether right or wrong, is no Matter.

But *Solomon* knew very well that the Way to true Glory, and to strengthen his Kingdom, was to maintain Peace at Home by good Alliances with the neighbouring Nations. And to encourage Foreigners to come and settle in the Country, he granted a general Indulgence, or Toleration, with Regard to Priesthood and Sacrifices, that every one, without Molestation, might take their own Way. It was this which enraged the Prophets, and made them turn their Heads more than ever to Politics. They were resolved either to restore and guard the legal Priesthood, or destroy the Crown, though they happened to destroy both. But I must take some Notice of several Things which this Author has offered with Regard to the Observations

vations I had made concerning the Temper and Conduct of the Prophets, after this great Revolution and Division of the Kingdom.

It is certain, that after this great Revolution and Division of the Kingdom, there were nine such Revolutions in 240 Years, in which one Royal Family, with all their Friends and Adherents, were cut off, by popular Outrage and Fury, to make Way for another, who still governed upon the same Principles of Toleration. But can it be conceived, or supposed, that God would do this immediately, and without any Regard to the Event? Would he for 240 Years together have set aside one idolatrous Family by mere popular Rage, Rebellion, and Murder, to make Way for a worse, and to strengthen Idolatry still more and more? It is very plain from the whole Story, that the Prophets were deeply concerned in all this, and that they inspired the People from Time to Time with such Outrage and Madness, by their pretended Declarations from God, as in the Cases of *Jeroboam*, *Baasha*, *Abab*, and *Jehu*. These spiritual Politicians might think, by making such Examples, to force the Kings of *Israel* at length to quite their Idolatry, and re-unite themselves to the Kings of *Judah*, or House of *David*: But surely God himself could not be so much mistaken. And there is not one Instance in any of these Cases, which this Author has offered, to prove an immediate Commission and Revelation from God, but what the Thing itself speaks the contrary.

Page 308, the Author represents me as justifying *Jezebel* in destroying the Prophets of the Lord, and condemning *Elijah* for destroying *Baal's* Prophets. But I had justified or approved of neither. I had observed indeed, that these Prophets of the Lord would never suffer any other Prophets or Priests to live, but such as were of their own Religion, whenever they had it in their Power to destroy them. And that consequently they could not pretend to any Right to Toleration themselves, when a Government was against them. It is certain that these Prophets of the Lord, as he implicitly calls them, had ever acted upon the Principles of Persecution, and their very Constitution and Profession were such. But that God had instituted such a Scheme of Persecution, Superstition, and false Religion, though he continually supposes and takes for granted, is what he cannot prove, and he seems to be very conscious of his Inability in the Case. For otherwise why does he not name some of those mutable and varying Circumstances, which must have altered the eternal, immutable Law of Nature, Reason of Things, and Moral Perfections of God, with Regard to that particular People and State? Why does he not shew that Superstition and false Religion, in all other Cases, may be true Religion and divine Institution under a Theocracy, or where himself is the immediate Lawgiver and Governor. If his Argument proves any Thing, it must prove that Persecution and Superstition is true Religion,

ligion, and most agreeable to the Will of God, since he instituted this among his own peculiar People, while he himself was King and God of *Israel*. But the *Jewish* Priesthood and Sacrifices never were, and never can be, the true Religion, or the Worship of the true God. And must not this Writer's Argument for Superstition and false Religion, as Matter of immediate divine Institution, hold as good in the Mouth of any other Persecutor, or Advocate and Patron of Superstition? As much as this Law was ever in force, it must be in force still, for if ever it was divinely instituted, I challenge him to shew me the Repeal. But this he cannot do, and yet he thinks Persecution and Superstition must be defended in Support of *Christianity*.

When an immediate Commission for doing a Thing is pretended to from God, any Man, who would guard himself against the grossest Imposture and Delusion, would consider the Nature of the Thing itself, or how far it is agreeable to the certain rational Notions we have of God, and his natural and moral Perfections. Without this there is no Imposture or Deception which a Man might not, or must not, be liable to: But our Author is for taking a quite contrary Method, and for judging of Mens Commission and Authority from God by their own Pretensions to it and Declarations concerning it. But I presume he would not thus take the Words of *Zoroaster* or *Mahomet*, though he might as well do this in one Case as

another, had he no particular Prejudice or Bias on one Side more than the other. The very Miracles upon which he believes the divine Authority of *Moses*, would be so many plain convincing Reasons against it, had he found any such Stories and Accounts of Things in the *Persian Zerdusht*, or *Mahometan Koran*; and thus kissing goes by Favour, and the Proof of one Revelation shall destroy the Credit of another. And had not our Author taken this Privilege, he must certainly have suppressed a great Part of his Book, and deprived the World of such a Collection and Digest of his Sermons. But, *Page 318*, he says, *The Question remains, what Proof is there that God did indeed send the Prophet to anoint Jehu, and that all this was done by the divine Order and Appointment?* This is indeed the most material Question that could have been put, and therefore I wondered to see him put it. But the Matter it seems is as clear as Day-light. For these two Prophets *Elijah* and *Elisba*, as an Attestation of their divine Mission, were enabled to work more and greater Miracles than had been wrought in several hundred Years before. But in the first Place, he cannot prove the certain Truth of the Facts, but must take them intirely upon Trust from the Historian. And then these Miracles, supposing them real, were not wrought to prove the Infallibility of the Historian, nor the Infallibility of the Prophet, nor his particular Commission to anoint *Jehu*, and set him about such unnatural bloody Work as

he did. So that this Writer has here proved nothing but his own *Credulity*, and his Inclination to have proved more, if he could. We know very well, that false Prophets and the greatest Impostors may work Miracles, so as, if possible, to *deceive the very Elect*. How does this Writer know by any outward sensible Appearance, how extraordinary soever, that it denotes any divine Commission, or is intended as an Attestation to any Thing from God, without considering the Nature, Reason, and Tendency of the Thing itself? If he has any such Rule, let him communicate the Secret, and not write so much like a Prophet himself.

Page 421, the Author comes to the Point of *Hazael*, the chief Captain of the King of *Syria*, and the Management between the Prophet *Elisha* and him, which he says, *Is from the Beginning to the End one entire Misrepresentation, as any one will find by the Account given in the Place, which he himself refers to, 2 Kings viii. 7.* I am willing to abide by the Historian's own Account of this Matter in the Place referred to. I had supposed that 40 Camels Load of the richest Goods in *Syria* might be a Bribe to a poor Prophet, as it was sufficient to have bribed any Prince then in the World. But I did not, it seems, say *what this Bribe was given for, or what could be Hazael's View in it.* But I thought I had told this, and I am persuaded that this Writer is the only Man that ever mistook it. The King bid the Captain take a Present, and go and enquire of the *Man*

of God about his Health, whether he should recover or no, but he did not bid him take such a Present as 40 Camels Load, &c. It cannot be thought that a Servant would give such a Present to a Prophet without his Master's Knowledge, without some extraordinary View in it, or that the Prophet who took the Bribe should be so dull as not to see the Design of it. And therefore the Prophet, though he told the Captain that his Master's Distemper was not in itself mortal, but that he might recover; yet God had shewed him, that he, *Hazael*, should be King of *Syria*; and this could be done no other Way, but by dispatching the King, whose Disease was not otherwise mortal. This Method the aspiring Captain took, and so came to the Kingdom by divine Authority, after he had murdered his Master. *But was it in the Power of Elisha to set whom he pleased upon the Throne of Syria?* No, but it was in his Power to set an ambitious Servant into the right Way of obtaining the Crown by Treachery and Murder, and this he did, after he had compounded with him, as he thought, for the Peace of his own Country, but in this he was mistaken. He pretends that the Prophet very well knew that *Hazael* would prove a greater Plague to *Israel*, than all the Kings of *Syria* that had gone before him. But how does it appear that the Prophet *very well knew this?* He feared it indeed, but, upon *Hazael's* solemn Declarations to the contrary, he believed otherwise before he gave him that Hint, or put him into a Way of crowning
his

his Wishes, by dispatching his Master, when he had told him before, that the Disease was not mortal, and that the King *might live*. But if this Prophet, who knew every Thing, had known what *Hazael* would do in such a Case, and did not advise him against it, he was certainly guilty of the Murder. Nor can all the Criticism in the World make any one believe, who will but read and consider the Story, that the Prophet did not design the Event as it happened, and put the Captain into the Way of it, after he had taken his solemn Vows and Protestations, that, in such a Case, he would be favourable to *Israel*. But this Prophet having taken his Reward before-hand, could have no good Reason to expect the Performance of Promises afterward; and had he known what would have happened from *Hazael's* being King of *Syria*, he must have been the foul Betrayer of his Country, to tell the Captain that God had shewed him that he should be King, though his Master's Distemper was not mortal. For nothing I think can be more evident than this, that, in such a Case, no plainer Hint or Direction for Murder could have been given. And this Prophet's taking so rich a Bribe, or Present, if he will, was a plain Proof that he had an Interest to make with the Captain, and that he was not absolutely abstracted from the World. But this Writer seems to care for nothing else, if he could but prove that the Prophet had the certain Fore-knowledge of Things to come. For

this must be by *immediate Inspiration from God*. And yet this is a gross Paralogism, unless he could prove that all Fore-knowledge must be from God immediately, and that the Devil, or evil Spirits, can fore-know nothing that we are ignorant of. All *Fore-knowledge* with this Writer is *divine Inspiration*, though he knows not what to do with it when he has got it.

The Shift this Author makes to get off with *Jeroboam's* prosperous Reign, who was as great an Idolater as any of the Kings that went before him, is the most miserable that ever I met with. I had given the true Reason, but this Writer coins one. The Reign of *Jeroboam* the Second had been a long, prosperous, and glorious Reign, though he had encouraged and supported the same Idolatry with *Jeroboam* the First, the Son of *Nebat*, who made *Israel* to sin, and who first introduced the Worship of Idols under the Countenance and Protection of the Regal Power. This Sort of Idolatry was charged upon all the Kings of *Israel* afterward, and particularly upon this King. And from hence I had said, that this King was as great an Encourager of Idolatry as any that had gone before him. But this, saith our Author, *is not true, for he, Jeroboam the Second, only followed the Sin of Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, which consisted in worshipping the true God after a wrong Manner; whereas the House of Ahab had introduced the Worship of Baal, and the Heathen Deities, which was an express and*
open

open revolting from the God of Israel. One would think by this, that there had been two Sorts of Idolatry in *Israel*; the one consisting in an innocent Kind of Idolatry, or only worshipping the true God in a wrong Way, which was the Sin of *Jeroboam* the First, who had introduced Idolatry, and with which the Idolatry of the very worst of their Kings had been branded for ever after. But *Abab* brought in another Sort of Idolatry, which consisted in the Worship of other Gods, as supreme, and rejecting the true God altogether. This was our Author's Imagination, or at least the Shift he was put to. But there is nothing in it. The Idolatry of the Heathens was all of the same Kind, the Worship of God by the Mediation of subordinate, national, residential, and tutelar Deities. This Idolatry was all subordinate, mediatorial Worship; for none of the Heathens were ever so absurd, as to imagine their Idols, or tutelar national Gods, to be the Supreme God himself, or the Creators of Heaven and Earth. *Jeroboam* the First set up the Calves, which were the *Egyptian* tutelar Gods; but *Abab* introduced the Worship of *Baalim*, which were the *Phœnician* or *Zidonian* tutelar Gods. But that the Gods of *Egypt* and *Zidon*, and the Gods of *Jeroboam* the First and Second, were not Gods of the same Nature and Kind, or the tutelar Gods of different Nations, is this Writer's mere Imagination. He would have it thought too, that the Worship of the *Zidonian* Gods, under *Abab* and his Family, had

had been established more than the Worship of the *Egyptian* and *Assyrian* Gods had been before, and after, under the two *Jeroboams*; but this is likewise mere Romance and Invention.

Towards the Close of this Chapter, he comes to consider what I had said about the War between the two Houses of *Judah* and *Israel* after the Revolt. I must own that I had made *Judah* first Aggressor in this War, and supposed that they had the chief Hand in carrying it on, under the Direction of the Prophets, up and down for 200 Years. But I must consider what he has offered to the contrary; and as he represents what I asserted as all Forgery and false History, from one End to the other, I have the more Reason to examine the Merits of the Cause.

Before *Jeroboam* had set up Idolatry in his Kingdom, the Prophets were in his Interest; and when *Rehoboam* had raised an Army against him of 180000 chosen Men, to reduce the revolted Tribes to his Obedience, the Prophets declared against the War, and told *Rehoboam*, that what had been done was from the Lord, *i. e.* by their Direction: But as soon as *Jeroboam* had set up the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, the Prophets immediately brought on a War upon him, and sent one of their Number, a Prophet, to declare War against him, and Destruction to his House. And from hence it is evident, that the Prophets had Peace or War in their Power, and that being looked upon as
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the Mouth of God to the People, they could work them up at any time into what Temper they pleased. The War thus entered upon, continued between the two Houses all the Days of *Jeroboam*, *Nadab*, and *Baasha*, the three first Kings of *Israel*, which was 48 Years. But the Prophets now saw that it would be impossible for *Judah* ever to reduce *Israel* to their Obedience by their own Strength; and therefore *Asa*, King of *Judah*, is put upon making an Alliance with *Benbadad*, King of *Syria*, for the utter Destruction of the revolted Kingdom. *Then Asa took that was left in the Treasures of the House of the Lord, and the Treasures of the King's House, and delivered them into the Hands of his Servants: and King Asa sent them to Benbadad the Son of Tabrimon, the Son of Hezion, King of Aram, that dwelt at Damascus.—* So *Benbadad* hearkened unto King *Asa*, and sent the Captains of the Hosts which he had, against the Cities of *Israel*, &c. 1 King. xv. 18—20. In consequence of this Alliance the whole Power of *Syria* was turned against *Israel* for 120 Years together. During the Course of this War, the Prophets could save their Men of *Judah*, in great measure, as having now engaged a foreign idolatrous Power to do their Work for them, to root out Idolatry at home. By this Alliance, which the Prophets of the Lord approved of, and justified in *Asa*, the Kingdom of *Israel* had been almost entirely extirpated and destroyed: For towards the End of this long and bloody War, the whole Kingdom of *Israel*
could

could raise but 50 Horse, 10 Chariots, and 10000 Foot, the *Aramites* having *crumbled them as Dust on the Ground*, 2 King xiii. 7. whereas at the first Division of the Kingdom they could bring into the Field against *Judah* 800000 Men, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 3. The good King *Asa*, who entered into this Alliance with the idolatrous *Syrians*, for the Destruction of the greatest and best Part of his own Country, is extolled to the Heavens by the Historians, who were the Prophets themselves: And yet *Jehosaphat*, who followed the Advice of the Prophets in most Things, is censured and condemned by them, for entering into an Alliance with *Abab*, in Defence of his Country. Nothing certainly could be more natural, or just, than for the two Kingdoms to unite against a common Enemy; and yet this raised the whole Possé of the Prophets to give the King of *Aram* the Victory, when the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah* were both joined in Battle against them. Upon this Occasion, 400 Prophets of the Lord were called together, and consulted by the two Kings; who, all to a Man, agreed in advising them to the Battle, and promising Victory. But *Micaiah*, another Prophet of the Lord, being called in, dissented from all the rest, and assured the two Kings, that if they engaged with the *Aramites* at that time their Armies would be routed. This Writer has the Front to say, that the 400 Prophets, who prophesied falsely, were not Prophets of the Lord: but if he credits the Historian, he must see that they were Prophets of the

the Lord, and that the Lord himself, in this Case, had deceived them, by sending out a lying Spirit among them, with a Commission to give them a false Vision for the Destruction of *Abab*: For all this, let the Reader turn to the twenty-second Chapter of the First of *Kings*. I might produce many Passages from these Historians, to shew that it was an established Maxim among them, that *if a Prophet was deceived, the Lord had deceived that Prophet*: And therefore, as their Predictions did not always come to pass, and they were often out in their Guesses, they frequently represent God as repenting, changing his Mind, and altering his Purposes, upon something or other which afterwards happened, and which these prophetic Visionaries could not foresee. And this Writer might as well contradict the whole Story and say, that the Priests of *Israel* were not the *Lord's Priests*, as that the Prophets were not the *Lord's Prophets*; because, perhaps, not one in five hundred of either was a wise or honest Man; but yet they all equally stood upon a divine Institution, and were chosen, inducted, and continued, according to the original Rules and Methods of their respective Orders, as God himself was supposed to have prescribed them. I know not whether all, or any thing of this will convince our Author, that the Prophets were at the Bottom of all those violent Commotions and bloody Revolutions in the State; but I believe any Man must see this who will read the History with his
own

own natural Eye-sight, and without systematical Spectacles.

As soon as the *Syrian* Arms had been divided, that they could no longer join with *Judah* in destroying *Israel*, the War was still carried on by *Judah* alone, but not with equal Advantage; for *Joash*, King of *Israel*, entirely routed *Amazia*, King of *Judah*, took the King Prisoner, razed to the Ground the Walls of *Jerusalem*, and took, and carried off with him, all the Riches and Treasures of the Temple. I place this in the 150th Year of the Revolt; during which Time the War had continued between the two Houses at very short Intervals. But thus ended this long and bloody War, with all the Projects and Politics of the *Naioth* Prophets; the Walls of *Jerusalem* were now levelled with the Ground, and the Temple robbed and spoiled of all its Riches and Glory; *Judah* and her Prophets had lost their faithful Friends and Allies, the idolatrous *Aramites*, and must now fall a Victim to the idolatrous *Israe-lites*, against whom the War had been undertaken, and the bloody Scene thus far carried on in the *Name of the Lord*: But let any Man read this whole Story, from the Revolt of the ten Tribes to the Time of *Jeroboam* the Second, and then tell me whether God, in his Providence, was not wiser and more just than these Prophets; or whether Providence had not, from Time to Time, baffled and confounded all their Politics?

To *Joash* succeeded *Jeroboam* his Son. He had a long and prosperous Reign of 41 Years; *Judah* lay now entirely at the Mercy of *Israel*; *Jerusalem* had been laid open, and the Temple stripped and left naked; and had *Jeroboam* now taken the same Method with *Judah*, as they had all along with *Israel*, he might have utterly extirpated and destroyed them: But instead of this, he contented himself with recovering all that the *Aramites* had taken from them in their Alliance with *Judah*, and extending his Conquests much further against *Syria*, without making any Reprizals upon his prophetic Country-men. *Judah* and the whole Nation now saw the Prophets had not been infallible, nor their Measures right.

Jeroboam died in the Year of the Revolt 193. After which such was the Confusion of the Nation, that there appears to have been an Interregnum of 14 Years before his Son came to the Throne; where he sat but three Months before he was murdered by *Shallum*; who after one Month's Reign was murdered by *Menabem*. This was in the 280th Year of the Revolt, or 772 Years before the Christian Æra. At this very Time, *Pul*, King of *Affyria*, invaded *Palestine*, and *Menabem* raised a Contribution for him of a thousand Talents, and so became his Vassal and Tributary, to put himself under his Protection. This *Pul* accepted of, and took upon him the Protection of *Israel* against *Judah*, or any other Adversaries, 2. *King*. xv. 19, 20. From this Time both Kingdoms became subject
and

and tributary to the *Assyrians*, who had entirely broke the Power of *Syria* before, and made themselves Masters of all the Western *Asia*: and now there was no farther Occasion for a War between the two Houses, or for settling true Religion among themselves by Force of Arms, since the Influence of the *Naioth* Prophets, and their Scheme of Politics were now at an end. But *Menabem* reigned 10 Years, and his Son *Pekabiah*, who succeeded him, two Years, and was then murdered by *Pekab*, the Captain of the Host, who reigned 20 Years; he was then slain by *Hoshea*, who after a nine Years Interregnum came to the Crown; and in the ninth Year of his Reign, *Shalmaneser* came up and destroyed *Samaria*, and led the Remainder of the People into Captivity. But about 24 Years before this, in the Days of *Pekab*, King of *Israel*, *Tiglath-pileser*, the Father of *Shalmaneser*, had laid waste, and captivated all the North-East Part of the Country to within 50 Miles of *Samaria*, as appears from the Account given of this first Captivity under *Tiglath-pileser*, 2 King. xv. 29. This first Captivity I place in the Year of the Revolt 234, and the last in the Year 258. In which Computation I cannot be mistaken above two or three Years, off or on, as to the first Captivity, but the latter is more certain, and agreed upon in Chronology. The Reason of this first Captivity of *Israel* was, that *Pekab* had made an Alliance with *Rezin*, King of *Aram*, against *Judah*, who was then under the *Assyrian* Protection. And four or five Years
after

after this, the same *Tiglath-pileser* came up and destroyed *Damascus*, and thereby entirely dissolved the Western *Syrian* Empire.

The Prophets which Providence raised up under these Commotions, had learned more Wisdom and Moderation by Experience than the former Prophets had ever discovered. They saw plainly that the Idolatry of their Kings had not been the only nor chief Cause of their national Calamities; they saw that their most idolatrous Kings had often had the best Success, and the most prosperous Reigns, and that God had not wrought Miracles, as had been expected, for supporting the true Religion by Force of Arms. They therefore exhorted the Kings and People to submit peaceably to the conquering Powers, and to amend and reform their Lives and Manners; to leave off their Swearing, Drunkenness, and Whoredom, and to reform the gross Bribery and Corruption that prevailed among them from the highest to the lowest, and of which the Nation in general was guilty, not only the Commonalty, but even their Priests and Prophets, Magistrates and Judges. They represented this as the most likely Way to procure the Protection of Providence, and not their continual Rebellions and Revolts from the conquering idolatrous Nations, and the Expectation of Miracles for their Deliverance. But before this, we had heard of no other Cause of their Miseries and Calamities, but the Idolatry of their Kings, who indulged their Subjects in observing the Sacrifices and Festivals of other Na-

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tions,

tions, which drew off the People from the Priests of the Lord. But I have shewn the Revenues of these holy Priests, as settled by Law, were grown insufferable, and that it was impossible to pay them their legal Demands, and support the Weight of the Crown too: Nor will any wise Prince ever encourage such vast and enormous Church-Revenues, which must be all exempted from the national Service and Defence, as well as the Persons to whom they are paid.

I have been the more particular upon all this, to let the Reader see the Justice and Candour of this systematical Divine while he is triumphing through all the former Part of his 11th Chapter, as if I had denied the Attempts of these new reforming Prophets, or had not sufficiently pointed out the Time in which they lived. It is evident, that *Isaiab*, *Hosea*, and *Micah*, were all contemporary, that they all prophesied under the *Assyrian* Conquests, and that they were all living and prophesying at the last *Assyrian* Captivity. But perhaps this Master of History and Chronology did not know that there had been any *Assyrian* Captivity before *Hosea's* Time, when the *Assyrian* Conquests began, or when the *Naioth* Prophets, or *Samueline* Society, with their Schools, were discarded and set aside.

But the Author soon shews more of his Learning and Knowledge in History, by representing it as a *very absurd Thing*, that the *Jews* should quit their Idolatry, and take up with their later Notions in Religion from the *idolatrous* Persians,

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the Adorers of the Sun and of Fire. But it is certainly a very strange thing, that a Man who would be thought learned, and to be acquainted with History, at this time of Day, should believe this groundless Story and Abuse of the *Persians*; a Calumny which had been cast upon them by some *Greek* Historians, who knew nothing of the *Persians* or their Religion: But Dr *Hyde*, *de Relig. Veter. Persar.* has fully refuted this, shewn the Ground of the Mistake, and proved, beyond all Contradiction, that the *Medes* and *Persians*, from their very first Records, had been never Idolaters, but had always kept to the Worship of the true God; and it is well known in History, that the *Persians*, while their Empire lasted, destroyed all the idolatrous Temples, and *Sabeen* Worship, both in *Asia* and *Greece*, so far as they could come: And there are many Passages in *Isaiab*, which refer to this Downfal and Destruction of all the Temples and Idols of the antient *Affyrians* and *Babylonians*. The *Persians* had purged all *Asia* of Idolatry, and kept it out for about 200 Years, during their Monarchy, though it broke in again like a Deluge, and the antient Gods of *Egypt* were again restored by the *Greek* Conquest of *Asia*. These are no new Discoveries; it is what this Author himself must have known, had he consulted History and Chronology so much as he has his System; and had he only considered what Dean *Prideaux* himself has given us out of Dr *Hyde*, concerning *Zoroaster* and the *Per-*
ian Religion, he must have seen that the *Per-*
sians

sians were no Idolaters. *Zoroaster* taught the Doctrines of one God, and of a general Judgment, and future State of Rewards and Punishments, as plainly and expressly as Christ and the Apostles did 400 Years after. But *Zoroaster* did not pretend to introduce these Doctrines as a new Revelation to himself, for it had always been the Religion of the *Persians* many hundred Years before him, and during the whole Course of the *Assyrian* and *Babylonian* Monarchies.

Zoroaster, as all the *Persian* and *Arabic* Writers agree, had been a Servant, in his younger Years, to the Prophet *Esdra*s, not *Ezra* the Scribe. And in the second Book of *Esdra*s, these Doctrines are as clearly and expressly taught, and the Difficulties of Providence as rationally and solidly accounted for upon this Principle, as in any Part of the New Testament. The 24th and 25th Chapters of St *Matthew's* Gospel, is a plain Transcript out of this Prophet, and a great part of it almost *verbatim*. It would be easy to prove, that the Prophet *Daniel* lived pretty late under the *Persian* Monarchy, and not above one Generation earlier than *Esdra*s : but, perhaps, this Writer does not know, that after the *Babylonian*, there was a *Persian* Captivity of twice 70 Years ; during which time the *Jews* had been scattered and dispersed all over the *Persian* Dominions, and that their City and Temple, built after their Return from *Babylon*, had, under this second Captivity, been entirely burnt, destroyed, and laid in Rubbish and Ruins. But I should be loth to enter into any

any Historical or Chronological Disputes with this learned Writer, who, seems to be so perfectly well qualified for it.

I must therefore conclude, that the *Jews* quitted their Idolatry while they were subject to the *Persians*; during which Time, of upward of 200 Years, they could not have been indulged or tolerated in any sort of Idolatry, had they been ever so much inclined to it; and from this People they must have taken their Notions of a general Judgment, a Resurrection of the Body, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, since from this Time their Books and Writings are clear and express as to those Doctrines; whereas before we find nothing of it even in their most reforming Prophets, without torturing and straining the Text into it, and using a Violence which would not be thought fair in interpreting any other Writings. In short, every Word this Author has said about the *Persian* and *Magian* Religion is false. It is not true, that they made two independent Principles, a good and a bad, and worshipped both, or that they worshipped either the Sun or Fire. Their Notion of the two Principles was no other than the current Doctrine among *Jews* and *Christians* concerning God and the Devil; they always maintained, that the good Principle would at last prevail and destroy the evil one, together with the Darkness, which had been his Seat and Abode; and that after this, celestial Light and Glory would eternally take Place among all the Creatures of God. And this was the

true Doctrine of the *Manichees* afterwards, tho' Mr *Bayle* has misrepresented it, for no other Reason that I can see, but to try what he could say for the greatest Absurdity that could ever be supposed, or entred into any Man's Head : Nor did they worship the Sun or Fire, or any Thing but the true *God*. They worshipped God, or invoked the supreme Being, towards the Sun or Fire, as looking upon it to be the best sensible Emblem or Representation of his Power and Presence ; and this made some of the *Greeks*, who knew nothing at all of their Religion, conclude that they worshipped the Sun and Fire : and Dr *Hyde* has so fully cleared up this, that if this Author has read him, as he seems to refer to him, his Misrepresentation of this Matter must be inexcusable. *Zoroaster* taught, that the Punishment of the Wicked would only be between Death and the Resurrection ; at which Time he supposed that, being thoroughly purged and cleansed from their Sins, they would be restored to Happiness. And this was a Doctrine infinitely more humane, than the Opinion of those who will have no Religion, if they cannot establish the eternal Dominion of the Devil in Hell, over the far greater Part of God's Creatures. Nothing less than such eternal, implacable, and inexorable Revenge could satisfy the Malice of the *Jews* ; but herein they worshipped the Devil more effectually than ever the *Persians* did. But I hope this Writer in Defence of Judaism will not justify Diabolism ;

and yet I know not what he might do in Opposition to me.

But after all, the wisest and best of the Moralists and Reformers among the Prophets, who lived before the *Persian* Empire, speak not one Word of the Resurrection of the Body, or a future State of Rewards and Punishments, and therefore whatever Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteousness they might preach, they never urged or enforced them under the proper Motives and Sanctions of Religion. This Author's Attempt to prove the contrary, in a tedious Harangue of seven or eight Pages at the Close of his 11th Chapter, is such a Run of poor systematical inconclusive Stuff that it deserves no Notice. Had they urged Obedience upon any such Principle, is it credible that they should never once mention it, or that they should not have been as plain and express upon it as their Prophets and Writers were afterward, when these Doctrines came to be known and received among them? Would Preachers of Righteousness thus omit or suppress the proper and most effectual Motives to it, and not have been as plain, direct, and explicit in them, as in the Moral Duties and Obligations themselves? Would *David* have been so much at Loss to account for the Prosperity of the Wicked and Sufferings of good Men in this Life, had he known any thing of a future State of Retribution? Surely had he known or believed any thing of this, he never would have solved the Difficulty as he did, by supposing an equal Distribution

of temporal Good and Evil at last ; that the Wicked flourished but for a short Time, and the Adversity of the Righteous was soon compensated by greater temporal Blessings and Prosperity : Or had he known any thing of a future eternal State of Torments he would never have poured out so many execrable Curses and Imprecations of temporal Vengeance upon his Enemies, without once sending any Man to the Devil ; doubtless the holy Zeal of this Royal Prophet would have risen higher, had he known of any farther or greater Revenge to have been executed upon those that hated him. And as to *Job*, the Argument of the whole Book turns upon the Justice and Equity of God and Providence towards good and bad Men : and *Job*'s Friends could never have charged him with some secret Sin or Iniquity, against all that had been ever known, or observed in his Life and Manners ; they could never, I say, have done this merely, and on the Account of his present Afflictions, had they taken a future State into their Account. But this Consideration is never once mentioned, or supposed, among them on one Side or the other ; and *Job* himself seems confident, that notwithstanding his present State of Misery, and though his Flesh was perishing, and falling from his Bones, yet was the Case much worse, and had his very Reins been consumed within him, yet as God, his Redeemer and Deliverer, was able, he would at last appear for him, justify his Integrity, and give them a very sensible Conviction of it by restoring him : and thus

the Story concludes, and the whole Argument winds up in an equal temporal Distribution of Good and Evil, without the least Consideration of a future State of Rewards and Punishments.

The very first Mention that is made of a Resurrection of the Body, and a future State, by any *Jewish* Author, is in the Prophet *Daniel*, who lived under the *Persian* Monarchy, and was a Captive in *Persia* at the same Time, or under the same Reign, with *Ezra* the Scribe, *Esdra*s the Prophet, *Nehemiah*, *Mordecai*, *Hester*, and the rest of the Nation. As for our present Book of *Daniel*, as we now have it, with its Apocryphal Fragments, it is very plain that it contains historical Memoirs and Remains of several different Persons living at very distant Times, though thrown together under under one common Name; and some of these Stories of *Daniel* are perfectly romantic and contrary to all true History. The *Daniel* who was taken Captive the first of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and was then a young Man in his prime, could not be the same Person with that *Daniel* who decided the Case between *Susanna* and the Elders 77 Years after, when *Astyages*, or *Darius*, the last King of the *Medes*, died, and *Cyrus*, the *Persian*, took his Kingdom; *Susanna*, ver. 65. *Dan.* i. 6. And much less could he be the same *Daniel* who was contemporary with *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, and who received Intelligence by the Angel, while he was offering up his Supplications, that the
Decree

Decree was come out for the Restoration of the People : But the Historical and Chronological Errors of this Book are too many and gross to be insisted on here ; and besides, I would not clog this Controversy with any thing of that Nature. But I shall now proceed to the Author's twelfth Chapters, where he makes a Transition from the Old Testament to the New, and consider his systematical Divinity there.

S E C T. VIII.

Jesus not the Jewish prophetic Messiah, he disclaimed the first and most essential Character of the Messiahship. The Author's Cavils and Evasions about it, exposed and refuted. The Apostles were not infallible, and never pretended to it. The Differences and Divisions among themselves, a most evident Proof of it. The Author's Pretences against it, vain and trifling. He uses the Words Inspiration, and immediate Revelation in a general, loose and undefined Sense, and is not able to explain what he means by it, nor proves any Thing about it. The Miracles and extraordinary Gifts farther considered, and the Author's Suppositions about them shewn to be weak, trifling, and perfectly inconclusive.

THE Author's 12th Chapter, and almost every Thing that follows to the End of the Book, is little more than one continued Rant. He cries out like a Man ground between two Mill-Stones, considering what I had granted on the one Hand, and what he cannot prove on the other. He confounds his own systematical Divinity with Christianity, and seems to be contending rather for *Bacon* than Religion. It is plain, that his Religion is an
implicit,

implicit, historical Faith, and that without this, all the Duties and Obligations of Moral Truth and Righteousness, when placed upon their own sure everlasting Foundations, can stand him in no stead. My Christianity is the eternal, immutable Religion of God and Nature restored. But what his Christianity is, he is not able to tell us, nor has he so much as attempted it in any one single Point of Doctrine. But this systematical Hero seems to be thus enraged, because I had granted him so much, and that he sees himself incapable of proving more.

And now I hope the Reader will forgive me in not quoting an Author regularly, who always preaches without a Text. I am sure there can be no greater Blunders or Falsifications than what he is guilty of, in all that I had said about Jesus, as the *Jewish* Messiah, according to the *Prophets*. That the *Jewish* Messiah, according to all the Prophecies concerning him, was to be a great temporal Prince, and to restore the Kingdom to the House of *David*, is so very evident, that I should scorn to dispute with a Man who would deny it. And that our Saviour Jesus Christ disclaimed all such temporal Power, and declared on his Trial before *Pilate*, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, he cannot deny. What then does this Man mean? Must a Person be a *Jewish* Messiah, according to the *Prophets*, who disclaims and renounces an essential Character of that Messiahship to his Death? Or did he claim a
 Thing

Thing before, which he denied and disclaimed at last? But such is his systematical Fate, and must always be the Fate of *School-Divinity*, that he is forced to affirm and deny the same Thing. He was the *Jewish prophetic Messiah*, and yet he pretended to, or claimed, no *temporal Power*. But O! the Power of systematical Divinity, and the Front of systematical Divines! How necessary are such Teachers to confirm us in our Catechisms, and what, O! what, should we do without them?

I had maintained that Jesus Christ had never declared himself explicitly and directly, as to this essential prophetic Character of the *Jewish* national Messiah, neither to the Populace nor to the Rulers, nor to *John the Baptist*, who sent two of his Disciples, while he was in Prison, to put the Question home to him. But when he came upon his Trial, he openly and directly disavows this Character, and enraged the Populace by it, who had hitherto stood by him, and therefore thought themselves now deserted and betrayed. And ought not this Writer to have said something or other to this directly, and without Evasion? Or does he think that the Pulpit must always bear him out in every Thing that is base and dishonourable? But the plain Truth of the Matter was this, That our Saviour answered to one Part of the prophetic Character of the *Jewish* Messiah, as the Restorer of Moral Truth and Righteousness, but not to the other, as the Restorer of the Kingdom, which last therefore he always evaded,

evaded, and never had declared himself, off or on, till he came upon his Trial, upon such a Charge, and then he absolutely disclaimed and renounced it, and they could not prove it against him. This is what I had said, and what this Writer dares not contradict. But he pretends that, according to me, *he, Christ, had suffered himself to be carried about all over the Country for a Twelve-month together by the Jewish Mob, and to be declared their Messiah, &c.* page 348. But there is not one Word of Truth in all this, the Mob indeed followed him under this Notion for a Twelve-month together, but that he *suffered* it, or *seeked* it, is the quite reverse to what I had said. So far from it, that he had always sought a Retreat, and to keep himself as much as possible out of the Way from any such popular Concourse. During this Time he continually kept himself as much as he could in Woods, Deserts, and the most remote Parts of the Country. And when great Multitudes of the Populace had found him out, and flocked about him, after he had preached to, and exhorted, them, he sent them away, and then withdrew himself, and they could scarce ever find him twice in one Place. But as soon as they could get any Intelligence, they followed and crowded about him again, as their King, and he could not prevent this popular and epidemical Madness. And when he went up to *Jerusalem* for the last Time, he designed to have kept the Festival privately, and *Incog*; but the Rabble or Populace

Populace had met with him upon the Road, set him on Horse-back, or on an Ass, the Horses of that Country, and led him in Triumph through the City, and proclaimed him King. And when they had done this, they guarded him from Day to Day, for four or five Days at least, while the Rulers dared not lay Hands on him *for Fear of the People*. During this Time he preached publickly in the Temple, and other Places of Resort, the Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteousness, and did not spare the gross Corruptions and Abuses of the Scribes and Pharisees, or Rulers themselves. But in the mean while, he gave no Umbrage to the Government, or any Ground of Suspicion that he had any Design or View to the Kingdom; though the Populace or Mobility all understood him so. And therefore while they were in this Humour, he might have got clear off, and escaped the Hands of the Rulers for that Time, had not *Judas* betrayed him in the Manner that is very well known. They could not now have seized him in the Day without an immediate Rescue, while the whole Populace were so strongly in his Interest, and therefore they were forced to do it by Stratagem, and find him out in the dead of the Night, and in a close Recess, by bribing and corrupting one of his own Servants and Attendants. But when he came upon his Trial, and had renounced all Pretensions to the Kingdom, the Populace all turned against him at once, and it was not then in the Power of the Government

Government to save him. This is the Representation which I had given of the Matter, and which I have been the larger in repeating, that the Reader may see the true State of the Case, and the great Candour and Fairness of my Adversary.

What this Author *rants* upon, for I cannot call it *Preaching*, throughout this whole Chapter, proceeds upon a gross Mistake; as if I had made the Restoration of the Kingdom to be the one and only Character of the Messiah; whereas I only made it a necessary, essential Character, and no Person could be received and owned by the *Jews* as their Messiah, without this Character. And yet this Champion of Contradiction and Inconsistency, would make Jesus to be the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah without this Character, and after he had renounced and disclaimed it. But his own Apostles and Disciples were of another Mind, who all forsook him, and gave up all Hopes and Expectations from him, as soon as they had given up this Hope of a Restoration of the Kingdom. And had they not afterward believed his Resurrection from the Dead, which revived the same Hope and Expectation from him again, they had never troubled themselves any more about him, or preached him as the Messiah.

It is very true, that the whole *Jewish* Nation, not excepting the Apostles of the Circumcision, in Consequence of their Prophecies, expected a State of Truth and Righteousness,

as well as of Peace and Prosperity under the Messiah. But then the latter was to be the Pledge and Security of the former, and they were not to receive or believe in any one as the Messiah, but a conquering Prince of the House of *David*. And therefore all the other Characteristics of the Messiahship could have availed nothing, had not the Genealogies, which at that Time they were very sure of, proved Jesus of *Nazareth* to have descended in a direct Line from *David*. And yet the Difference between these Genealogies in *Matthew* and *Luke*, as some might think, could not bear the whole Weight of Christianity. That there should be fourteen Generations more between *David* and Christ, reckoning by Father and Mother, through a Space of 1100 Years, might seem improbable, and no Man would produce it as a Demonstration of the Being of a God, or of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. And yet if our Author should lose but such an Uncertainty as this, all his Christianity is gone, and his immediate Revelation or Inspiration must come to nothing.

But though the infallible Prophecies concerning the temporal Kingdom of *David*, and the Distribution of universal Peace and Righteousness from that to all other Nations, have never yet been accomplished, yet our Author lives in the firm Belief, that it will be done one Time or other. But if he would only suffer his Religion to wait for the Confirmation of his Faith, I believe he would never trouble the World

about it more. Perhaps this Writer may blame, or censure me, for not having taken a particular Notice enough of his Argument in this Chapter; but the candid Reader, I am sure, will have good Nature enough to forgive my not doing what I could not possibly do. And this being the Case, I shall come to the Argument of his 13th Chapter.

I had said that the Apostles never pretended to Infallibility, and that if they had, their Differences and Divisions among themselves, must have exposed and confuted any such Pretence. The main Difference arose about the Terms of Communion between the Christians of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, or between Christian *Jews* and *Gentiles*. In this grand Point they could never come to any Agreement, but the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision opposed St *Paul's* Ministry among the *Gentiles* as long as he lived. When they were met together in their grand Council, they had very long and warm Debates upon the Question, Whether the whole Law, or only a Part of it, should be imposed on the *Gentiles*, or how far they should be obliged to conform to it. This shews evidently that they looked upon themselves as bound to the whole, and that they made a Matter of Religion and Conscience of it. And a strong Party of the Sect of the *Pharisees*, who believed and were come over to the *Nazarenes*, insisted strenuously on the total Conformity of the *Gentiles* to the Law. Now if ever they had been under the infal-

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lible Guidance of the Holy Ghost, one should have expected it at this Time, when they were all met together in Council, and debating a Point of such vast Importance to the whole Church, upon which the Fate of Christianity itself was to depend. And yet we find no such unerring Spirit among them. Had they been infallible, they must have been all of one Mind, and no such Heats, Differences, and Disturbances, could have arisen in the Council. I had urged this, and a great deal more, from the Conduct of *Peter*, and the whole Christian Circumcision towards *St Paul* in his Ministry among the *Gentiles*. But our Author, though he takes no Manner of Notice of all this, yet he pretends to carry the Point against me; and he fully answers all that I had offered by overlooking the whole, and saying nothing to it. He harangues very long upon this, that he might be sure to run far enough out of the Way; he refers to many Texts of Scripture, in which they are said to be guided and directed by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Truth; and that they were true, open, and faithful in all that they taught and delivered, and did not go about to deceive. And from hence he concludes, that they must have been under some supernatural Impulse of Inspiration, or immediate Revelation, in all that they taught and delivered. But I am sure this dark Writer cannot tell us what he means by any such supernatural or super-rational Light; he has not been so good as to mention any one

of those supernatural Doctrines, which must have been above and beyond the Search and Investigation of all *human Reason*; and any Man not habituated to it, or making a *Trade* of it, would be ashamed to talk in such a general, loose, and unintelligible Way. But *by this Craft we get our living*. The inward divine Temper, the Spirit of Truth and Love, Peace and Purity, is the Spirit of God; this is the Spirit which God gives to all those whom he will favour and reward, and whatever flows from this Spirit comes from God, and is the only sure Mark and Pledge of divine Favour. But this is a Spirit which the Christian Jews never had, either in the Apostolic Age, or any other; they have been so far from such a Spirit, that God has never yet blessed them with any Spirit of common Decency, Peace, and Concord. And this self-sufficient Writer is continually raging and raving at me, for maintaining all the great important Principles and Doctrines of Religion in a rational Way.

Through the Remainder of this Chapter the Author declaims in his own Way upon the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Spirit, which is the Subject of his Preachment from *page 374 to page 390*. I had said, that those extraordinary Gifts and Powers, could be no Proof either of the Infallibility of Persons, or the Truth of Doctrines, because they were never confined to any Moral Character; but false Prophets and Teachers had them as well as the true; and they who had them were at Liberty

as to the Use of them, and might apply them either to good or bad Purposes. I supposed that whenever they had those Gifts and Powers, they were left to a discretional Use of them ; but I did not suppose, as this Writer imagines, that all, or any of them, were permanent standing Qualities, like the natural Powers and Faculties of the Mind. The contrary to this is evident enough, and what I very well knew, though I did not then chuse to speak it out ; and therefore this hasty Writer need not have taken so much Pains to prove it for me, and to draw on the Argument with so much greater Strength and Weight against himself. But his *Zeal* eats up his *Understanding*. He would readily grant me, that the Gift of Tongues was a permanent abiding Faculty, and that they could exercise this Gift at any Time, and upon any Occasion or Subject as they pleased. But this I deny, that they could speak those different Languages at Pleasure, or that they could speak them at all with any Sense, Coherence, and Consistency. And since he has given me this Occasion for it, I shall here examine the whole Matter, so far as we have any Account of it. The original Account of this is in the second of the *Acts*, where the Holy Ghost, in the Likeness of fiery cloven Tongues, fell upon about 120 at once ; and immediately they all began to talk in different Languages. A great Multitude being gathered together upon this Occasion, who were come up from all Parts of *Asia* to the Feast, were greatly astonished to hear them

thus talking all together, and uttering some Words which every Man understood in his own Language. Some were grave and serious upon this; they thought there must be something in it very extraordinary; and cried out, the wonderful Works of God! But others laughed, and as no Man could tell in any Language what they were talking about, or what they aimed in such a Confusion of Voices, concluded that they must be drunk, or under some Intoxication and Infatuation. or other. And thus the whole Company stood either wondering or laughing, and knowing nothing of the Meaning or Design of such a clang of Tongues, till, the rest being silent and composed, *Peter* stood up, and, in a rational coherent Discourse, let the People into the Occasion of all this. That what they had seen was from an extraordinary supernatural Spirit sent down from Jesus of *Nazareth*, whom they had crucified and slain, and whom God had raised from the Dead, and had given this wonderful Attestation to his being the Christ; and this had such an Effect, that about 3000 were converted and baptized into the Belief of Jesus as the Christ that Day. Upon the whole, this seems very plain, that while the 120 were talking all together in different Languages, no Man in any Language could make any Thing of it, or understand any Thing by it.

That this extraordinary Gift was no Gift of Knowledge, or Understanding in Languages, is farther evident from the Account *St Paul* gives

gives of it in the Church of *Corinth*, where it had bred very great Confusion and wild Disorder. But I wonder through what Glafs our Systematists read that 14th Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, if they read it with their own Eyes, they must needs see there a Description of those *gifted-Tongue* People exactly the same with our modern *French* Prophets. St *Paul* therefore, *ver.* 7—11. speaks of it as uttering different *Sounds* or *Voices*, instead of speaking different *Tongues*, and compares it to muttering, grumbling, piping, harping, and trumpeting, rather than talking in any articulate Language. While they were in these Fits, or Agitations, it was by Chance if they spoke any consistent Sense that could be understood or interpreted by any one present. And in this Case the Apostle mentions the Gift of *speaking* and the Gift of *interpreting* *Tongues* in this Way, as two different Gifts; and a Man might have the one without the other. One Man should speak a Language which he did not understand, and could not interpret, and another interpret a Language which he could not speak. Some of these tongue-gifted People, by Practice and Strength of Imagination, could work themselves up into those Raptures, Extasies, and strange preternatural Motions, and thereby lose their Reason and Senses almost at any Time; but others could not, and therefore were not thought so much favoured by the *Spirit*. But it is plain, by the whole Account of the Matter, that while they were under this mechanical Power

and Operation of the Spirit, they had no Reason or Understanding left of their own; and that this extraordinary powerful and blind Spirit had no Tendency at all, either to Instruction or Edification. If any Stranger or Unbeliever should have come in among them, while they were in these frantic Fits, he must needs think them *mad, or out of their Wits*, as the Apostle tells them, *ver. 23.* and as it is plain they were for the Time. St *Paul* therefore earnestly intreats them to covet the best Gifts, and such as might tend to Instruction, Exhortation, and godly edifying, and by no Means to covet or try to exercise such a Gift as this. And yet this is the wonderful Gift and Power of the Holy Ghost, by which the lying legendary Monks of the fourth Century would persuade us, that Christianity had been propagated all over the World, even so far as *India* and *China* in the Apostolic Age itself. But there is no authentic Account of any of the Twelve, but *Peter, James, and John*, as having had any Hand or Share in preaching and spreading the Gospel, and the rest having been disappointed of the Kingdom, might have betaken themselves to their fishing, and respective Callings again, for any Thing we know to the contrary. But because no Account is given of them among the *Acts* of the Apostles, the lying fabulous Monks aforesaid sent them off to *Persia, India, China, Africa, France, Spain, Germany*, and the Lord knows whether. But it is plain from the authentic Account which

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we have of the Matter, in the *Acts* and *Paul's* Epistles, that the Apostles of the Circumcision kept together in and about *Jerusalem* during all *St Paul's* Travels, where he still found them as he visited that City up and down at very distant Times. And we find them generally present in the Council, *Acts* xv, which I place in the Year 56, and but 14 Years before the Destruction of the Temple. And as they must now be growing old, it is not likely that they should undertake such vast Journeys after they had dropt or neglected their Commission above 20 Years. But that such Expeditions should have been undertaken, and *Luke*, who writ a Book professedly to record their Actions, say nothing of the Matter, is absolutely incredible. Nor can it be supposed, that these Men who were rigidly strict to the Law, should thus disperse themselves through the whole World, and among all Heathen Nations, where they could neither eat nor drink with any Body. The Travels of the Apostles therefore to show and exercise their Gift of Tongues, as we find it in Ecclesiastical Story, must be looked upon as perfectly fabulous and romantic. I have been the more particular here, that I might, if possible, settle this Account of the Gift of Tongues with the Author, since he has talked of it with as little Sense as they had talked with it.

This Writer, *page* 378, supposes, that those primitive Christians in the Apostolic Age, might have an extraordinary Gift of Wisdom and Knowledge, which they could communicate by
teaching

teaching in a rational Way. This might be, for any Thing I know, and therefore I shall suppose it as well as he. But what then, what follows? Why, if they had any such Gift, he says they could not possibly *abuse it*. *It is a Contradiction to suppose that any Person should, by the Exercise of this Gift of divine Wisdom and Knowledge, that is, by the very actual Exercise of the Knowledge of Truth, and by declaring and imparting to others the Knowledge he himself had of the Truth, promote and propagate false Doctrine and Error.* I believe it is impossible almost for any Man to read this and forbear laughing. He says it is a Contradiction to suppose that any Man should abuse any extraordinary Degrees of Wisdom and Knowledge, as long as he actually makes a right Use of it in communicating Truth to others. This is very oracular, that a Man cannot be supposed to make a right and a wrong Use of any Gift or Talent, whether ordinary or extraordinary, at the same Time. But why may not any extraordinary, as well as ordinary, Knowledge be abused? This Author cannot talk Nonsense, when he talks Sense; but he may abuse his better Understanding, and pretend that Nonsense is good Sense, and Falsehood Truth; and so might a Man of the most extraordinary Wisdom and Knowledge abuse it, by applying it to wrong Purposes, and doing the more Mischief with it.

In the next Place, *pag.* 380, he pretends to contradict and confute me, as having said, or supposed,

supposed, that the Power of working Miracles was a permanent abiding Habit, to be exercised at any Time, and at mere Will and Pleasure, like the natural Powers and Faculties. But he is grossly mistaken in imagining that I had said, or supposed, any such Thing, for I knew the contrary ; and that the healing Miracles could be only wrought upon those who had the *Faith* of healing. If a Man had this Faith of healing, he might be healed tho' he had no other Faith, nor any Virtue, and the wickedest Man might have this Faith as well as the most righteous Person ; and therefore we find that out of the ten Lepers, who were cleansed at once, only one of them returned to give Glory to God, or to thank our Saviour for what he had done. Madmen and Lunatics might have this Faith in a higher Degree than others, as they had the greatest Force of Imagination. And accordingly we find that a very great, if not the greatest, Part of those miraculous Cures were wrought upon such. That the Demoniacism of the New Testament was Madness or Lunacy, is evident from all the Symptoms, and the whole Description of it ; and any Man may be convinced of this, by only going to *Bedlam*, if he had never seen the different Species and Turns of Madness before. That Lunacy, Epilepsies, and other such extraordinary Distempers, should be ascribed to the immediate Presence, Power, and Agency of the Devil, is no Wonder, since this was the common Opinion not only among the *Jews* but all other Nations, while the natural Causes were unknown,

unknown, and the Cure scarce ever effected. But this cannot affect the Miracle, because the Cure of a Fever, or any common Distemper, by a Touch, or Word of Command, must be allowed to be very extraordinary and miraculous. I had therefore never said or suggested, that this Power of healing was constant, and not occasional ; but what I said was this, that whenever they had this Power, and could exercise it, as they were free Agents in it, they might make a good or bad Use of it, as much as of any natural Power which they had, and in the Exercise of which they were free. But when he can say nothing else, it is always in his Power to mistake me, and then confute his own false Suppositions. That all these extraordinary Gifts and Powers were occasional, he must needs see to have been my Opinion, and therefore he need not have proved it himself ; but I find he is resolved to do every Thing for me, and leave me nothing at all to do but to thank him.

S E C T. IX.

That there was a real Difference and Separation between Peter and Paul, occasioned by the different Gospels they preached; and that Peter himself was a false Apostle and Teacher, whenever he claimed any Authority and Apostleship among the Gentiles, or went about to urge his Jewish Faith among them, proved against this Writer's strong Assertions and weak Pretences to the contrary. His Objections to what I had offered relating to the Apocalypse, considered and answered. The Jewish Prophetic Messiahship a National Delusion, inconsistent with the true Faith of Christ, and the spiritual Nature of his Kingdom; this gross Delusion owing to their misunderstanding the Nature of the Abrahamic Covenant of Faith and Righteousness, and their taking it as an absolute Promise and Covenant of Peculiarity with that Nation. What had been said, with Regard to the Apocalypse, considered and defended.

THIS Author, in his 14th Chapter, which I am now come to, undertakes to prove, that there was no Difference between the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision in the Apostolic Age; that there was a perfect Harmony and Agreement
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between them; that *Peter* and *Paul* had never any Difference about the Obligation of the Law upon the *Gentile* Converts; and that all that I had offered to this Purpose is mere Invention, Forgery, and Misrepresentation. But I am sure if he has proved nothing else, he has proved himself to be a very bold and daring Writer, and made it evident, even to a sensible Demonstration, that he trusts to his Systems and his School-Divinity more than to his Bible. Were there such long and warm Debates, much disputing in the *Jerusalem* Council upon this Question, Whether the *Gentiles* should be bound to the whole Law, or only to Part of it? Did *Paul* afterwards withstand *Peter* to the Face, and charge him with Prevarication and Inconsistency? Did *James* send down his Jewish Zealots to *Antioch*, after the Decree of the Council, to insist upon Circumcision and Obedience to the whole Law? Did *Peter* and *Paul* break upon this, and a Schism in the Church happen upon it, during the whole Apostolical Age? Did not *Paul*, long after this, in the beginning of his Epistle to the *Galatians*, mention *Peter* personally, and by Name, five or six times, as the Head and Ringleader of those *Judaizers* and declare himself to be the only Apostle of the *Gentiles* by Revelation? That they had owned this, and given him the Right-hand of Fellowship upon it, not to disturb or intermeddle with him in his Ministry among the *Gentiles*, and did so openly and plainly charge the *Judaizing* Apostles and Teachers, as false Apostles and

and Teachers, and for usurping the Ministry which had been wholly left to him? Was all this, I say, true, and yet no Difference between *Peter* and *Paul*, or between the Apostles and Teachers, on one Side or the other? I have here asked this Writer a long Question, to avoid multiplying of Words, which must take him three or four Volumes more to answer, and furnish us with the Substance of his Sermons for seven Years to come. He owns that there were false Apostles and Teachers got in among the *Gentile* Churches, where no Apostle or Teacher but *St Paul*, or under his Direction, could have any Commission or Authority; but he will give you his Word for it, and prove it when he is at Leisure, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, had no hand in it. He will own, no doubt, that these Apostles had broke Faith with him, and were gone off from their Word in sending out their Agents and Emissaries against him; and yet he will maintain that there had been no Difference, but a perfect Harmony and good Understanding between them. But there is no disputing with such a Writer as this: He talks to the World as if he was in some little petty Congregation or other, where his own Word and Authority must pass for Gospel and Revelation.

The Author having harangued upon this, and talked, off and on, about it, as not knowing what to make of it, for two Sheets together, comes at last, *pag.* 424, to what I had said concerning the *Jerusalem* Council, as imposing
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the Law of Profelytism upon the *Gentiles*, as *necessary*, or as a Matter of *Religion* and *Conscience*. And here he says, that I *assert several Things, for which there is not the least Foundation in sacred History*. But let us hear what these Things are. But in talking of this Council, there is not one Thing in it, or relating to it, which he does not misrepresent, while he is charging me with Misrepresentation.

I had said, that the *Jerusalem* Council enjoined the Law of Profelytism upon the Heathen *Gentile* Converts, *i. e.* a total absolute Separation from the rest of the World, with Regard to Eating, Drinking, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, &c. and that they enjoined this as *necessary*, or as a Matter of *Religion* and *Conscience*, according to Law. But he says, this Law, or Decree of the Council, was not *precisely* the same with the Law of Profelytism, as given by *Moses*. What he means by *precisely* I do not know, or whether his Preciseness was a Matter of *Indifference* or *Necessity* to him; but I am sure it is the same Law, and founded upon the same *Superstitions*; that the People of God must not converse, or keep Company, with Idolaters: and I know that St *Paul* exempted his Heathen Converts from any Obligation to this ritual Part of the Law, and exempted himself from it; and that this was the Occasion of the whole Difference and Schism. And if the Author cannot see this, I must desire him once more to throw off his Spectacles, and his false Glasses,
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and to read the Bible with his own natural *Eyesight*.

The Author here tries, as much as possible, to darken and perplex the Case, by talking about the Profelytes of Righteousness, and the Profelytes of the Gate, which has not the least Relation to the Business of the Council, either as the Occasion of calling it, or to the Question debated in it. It is plain, from the Text, that the legal Profelytes were quite out of the Question, and had no Concern at all in the Debates of the Council. The Profelytes of Righteousness were thorough *Jews* and total Conformists, and, perhaps, two Parts in three of the whole Nation; at that Time, might be such Profelytes, and not of the natural Seed of *Abraham*; for they would *compass Sea and Land to make one*, and when they had got him, *make him much more a Child of the Devil than before*. And the Question concerning the Profelytes of the Gate, had been settled in the Church of *Jerusalem* fourteen Years before this Council, when *Peter* took them in, and we do not find the least Hint or Intimation of any Disturbance at *Jerusalem* about it afterward. But *Paul* and *Barnabas* had now preached *Christ* to the Heathen *Gentiles* at *Antioch*, and had converted great Numbers of them, without obliging them to the Law of *Moses*, either in Whole, or in Part. But certain of the Brethren in *Judea*, being alarmed at this, went down to *Antioch*, and taught the new converted Brethren there, the Disciples of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, that unless they

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were circumcised, and obeyed the Law of *Moses*; they could not be saved. And after *Paul* and *Barnabas* had had great *Dissent* and *Disputation* with these *Jerusalem* Zealots, the Church of *Antioch* could not be satisfied without appealing to *Jerusalem* to know the Right of the Matter, and what Doctrine of Christ they believed and preached there. This brought on the Council, and occasioned a great Question and Division among them. The *Jewish* Zealots stood to their Point, that though they had received the Profelytes of the Gate, who had been long Profelytes for Righteousness, as Church-Members, and granted them the Benefits and Privileges of the new Kingdom; yet they were not to take in the whole *Gentile* World upon such easy Terms; and therefore the new *Gentile* Converts, *those who from among the Gentiles had been turned to God*, should be circumcised, and obey the whole Law. This was the State of the Case; but the more moderate Part in the Council, after much ado, or much disputing, prevailed; and they agreed to receive the Heathen *Gentiles* into the Church, upon the same Terms that they had done the Profelytes of the Gate before. They should only separate themselves from Idolaters, and not eat and drink or maintain any friendly Intercourse with them, and then God would bless them as Brethren and Fellow Christians. But it is evident, that *St Paul* never submitted to this Order of Council, and he would never suffer his Heathen Converts to be enthralled by it, so far as he could prevent it. He
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had been at *Jerusalem* upon this Occasion, and brought them to as moderate Terms, as he could, and for the rest, he always took Leave to disobey, and preach against them. This I take to be the plain Matter of Fact, as related in the xvth of the *Acts*; and upon which I need not have said so much, if I had not had to do with a Polemical *School-Divine*. All that he says to make the Profelytes of the Gate the Subjects of this Decree, and the Occasion of the Question, is perfectly idle; and if he had all the Systematists in *England* with him, it could never set aside the plain Scripture Account of the Matter. He sees every thing through his Glasses, but he had much better read the Scripture without them.

But this Writer seems resolved to make up in Assurance what he cannot in Argument, for he tells us, in *pag. 417*, *That whatever Way we understand that Decree, there is not the least Proof that ever the Apostle Paul contradicted it; or that ever there was the least Difference between him and the other Apostles upon that Head*. But is it not very strange that *Paul*, before much People, should withstand *Peter* to the Face, and this upon the very Question of eating and drinking with the Gentiles, as *Paul* did, and as *Peter* himself had done for a Time; and that this Apostle, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, should mention *Peter* so often, and lay the chief Blame of the Division and Schism upon him, and that he should claim the sole Apostleship of the Gentiles to himself, and represent, as false Apostles, and

false Teachers, all that withstood him in this. Is it not strange, I say, that all this should be true, and yet no Difference between *Paul* and *Peter*, or any other Apostles of the Circumcision? I must own, that I should have thought this an unfurmountable Difficulty, had not our Author, for whom nothing is too hard, cleared it up so well. From all the Memoirs we have of *Peter's* Temper and Conduct, he was bold, daring, and enterprizing, when he thought himself safe; but would never stand to any thing against a strong Opposition, or when he apprehended himself in Danger. But our discerning Author can see no Marks or Appearances of this in the Story; but *Peter* was infallible, even when he denied his Master to his Face, with Oaths and Imprecations, in the High-Priest's House; or when he vowed, that his Master should not suffer Death, and give up his temporal Kingdom for the Salvation of the World; or when his Master, after his Resurrection, could hardly believe him sincere in his Vows and Protestations, that he loved him; nay, even the Pope himself could scarce stickle harder for the Infallibility of *Peter*, than this Protestant Divine does: and yet, if we take *St Paul's* Word for it, *Peter* had no more Right to the Apostleship of the *Gentiles* than he or I have. But I would not say any more to such a Writer upon this Head, he must dispute it further with the Church of *Rome*.

The Author has already clearly proved against me, that there was never any Difference between

tween *Peter* and *Paul*, with Regard to the Decree of the *Jerusalem* Council, which had settled every Thing before; that these two Apostles continued always good Friends; that no Division or Schism in the Church ever happened about it; and all that I had said to the contrary is pure Misrepresentation and false History. And now, in his 15th Chapter, he sets aside and fully confutes some other gross Mistakes of mine, which I had unhappily fallen into for want of consulting him about it. He undertakes to prove, that the Apocalypse is not the *Christian Revelation*; or that it is not there that we are to look for the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity; that there is nothing in that Book to countenance the Worship of Angels, Invocation of Saints, or Prayers for the Dead; that they did not confine Salvation to their own Messiahship; and that there is no Foundation in that Book for a Fifth Monarchy; with several other Things of Consequence, that will be considered in Course. This is, in general, what he undertakes to prove, and which I am now to examine.

As the very Title of this Book is the Christian Revelation, or *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*; as no other Book of the New Testament claims any such Character, or pretends to any new Revelation; and as I had so great an Authority as *Sir Isaac Newton* for it, that the same Book was received and owned as the true Christian Revelation in all the first Ages of Christianity, I thought myself pretty safe in supposing and affirming

firming it. But because I had asserted it, this Writer must deny it, though he could offer no other Reason for it; and I am persuaded, that if I had asserted, or maintained the quite contrary, he would have done it too, and taken the opposite Side. I am pretty well acquainted with him now as to this; if I had a Mind to prove a Thing against him, I would deny only to put him upon the Proof of the contrary, which I am sure he would attempt, whatever his Success might be. But, says he, *pag. 426*, “ It is
 “ evident, from the express Declaration of the
 “ Book itself, that it was not so properly and
 “ immediately designed to be a *Revelation* of
 “ *Doctrine*, as to be a Revelation of future
 “ Events. It is called the *Revelation of Jesus*
 “ *Christ*, to shew unto his Servants the Things
 “ which must shortly come to pass, *Chap. i. 1.*
 “ And again it is called the Prophecy, *Ch. xxii.*
 “ *19.* It is therefore a poor trifling Observa-
 “ tion, that no other Book of the New Testa-
 “ ment has the Word *Revelation* in the Title
 “ of it. If he could prove that no other Book of
 “ the New Testament was given by *Inspiration* of
 “ God, (as the Apostle *Paul* tells us *all Scripture*
 “ *is*) or was designed to instruct us in the Do-
 “ ctrine of Jesus Christ; this would be something
 “ to his Purpose.” It seems then, this Writer has
 got the Word *Inspiration*, and I have the Word
Revelation on my Side. But whereas he pre-
 tends to a better Right to his Word than I
 have to mine, I must take Leave to except
 against it; but, with Submission, I am not dis-
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puting with him about Words but Things. What he means by *all Scripture* as given by *Inspiration*, I am sure he cannot limit or explain, and I have settled this Account with him already: but what I mean by Matters of Revelation, or Matters absolutely above and beyond the Search and Investigation of *human Reason*, every Body must understand, and there is no Dispute about it. But I say, there is no other Book of the New Testament that pretends to any such *Revelation* above *Reason*, either in Name or Thing; and if this Writer could have produced any such Doctrine or Pretensions, he had here a proper Opportunity for it and sufficient Call to it; but his Business is mere Evasion, and he has nothing else to say or do. Could our Author have distinguished between Matters of *Reason*, and Matters of *Revelation* above Reason, he might have said something to the Purpose; but this he could not do, nor will his Scheme admit of it; and should he come to Particulars, he must presently look like a *Silver-Smith*: He involves himself in *Egyptian* Darkness; his Defence is Obscurity, and he knows it very well.

I had represented, or urged, the Four and Twenty Elders, with their Vials or golden Censers full of Incense, which were the Prayers of the Saints upon Earth, as a plain Proof of Submediatorial Worship before the Throne of God, upon the Principles of this Book. Whether the Four and Twenty Elders were designed to represent Saints or Angels, it was the same

Thing as to my Argument of Submediatorial Worship. But surely these Submediators were Beings before the Throne of God, subordinate to the Lamb, or Christ, himself, who had a Right and a Power to mediate with God for the Saints on Earth; and therefore, in my Opinion, it is a Confirmation of such Submediatorial Worship both of Saints and Angels. And I know, were I at Liberty here to enter into the Principles and Practice of the Catholic visible Christian Church, in the second and third Centuries, I could prove both the Worship and Invocation of Saints and Angels. But hear how he comes off, *pag. 427* *But what if the four and twenty Elders be only the Representatives of the Christian Church, and the Vials full of Odours be only designed as a figurative Representation, in the figurative Sense of Prophecy, of the Worship paid to God in the Church, which is Sir Isaac Newton's Interpretation of it, then the Author's Inference from it falls to the Ground.* But what if mediatorial and submediatorial Worship, in the prophetic Language and Stile, should be intended to represent the immediate direct Worship of God? And what if this prophetic Language and Stile should be something that this Writer cannot make the least common Sense of? Why then his Criticism must *fall to the Ground*, and he would be no more able to make Sense of this Book than *Sir Isaac Newton* himself was.

But there is another Instance in this Book for submediatorial Worship, which I did not

take Notice of, and which would have been more directly to my Purpose. I hope he will take this as a Kindness, though I am not much concerned about it whether he does or no. The Place I had forgot to mention the Reader will find, *Rev. viii. 3, 4.* An Angel here is represented as having a Censor *with much Incense, which he was to offer up with the Prayers of all Saints, &c.* This I should have taken as a plain Proof of submediatorial Worship, or the Worship of Saints and Angels, but the Author is of another Mind; he says, *pag. 428, The Word Angel admits of so many Senses in this Book, that no Argument can be drawn from it.* But why then does he talk of the Word *Angel*, if the Word in this Book has no certain fixed Meaning? I thought the Word had some Meaning or other, and that it could not signify *God* or *Jesus Christ*: But, it seems, the Word signifies nothing with him, or may signify any thing, or every thing, at Pleasure, in the *Prophetic Stile*. But I would not wish this Writer to make himself a *Prophet*, for I doubt he will come short of a *Rational Divine*. He is here defending a Book which he knows nothing of, and yet because I had given it in as *John's* he must defend it right or wrong.

As to what he says afterwards of this Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he denies to be the Christian Revelation, I do not think worth while to consider. I think he denies every Thing in the Christian Revelation that can be the true natural genuine Sense of it. He tells

us,

us, that this *very Book*, the *Christian Revelation*, is to be understood in some mystic, prophetic Sense or other, which he knows nothing of. This Book however, though it is not the whole, is yet certainly a Part of the Christian Revelation, when rightly understood. But because such an Understanding might be difficult or impossible, you must trust to better Understandings than your own, or be damned as Deists, Sceptics, Infidels, or what not.

That the *Nazarene* or *Christian Jews* in the apostolic Age, confined Salvation to their own Faith and Perswasion, and that they allowed of *no other Name given under Heaven, by which Men might be saved, but the Name of Jesus*, as their prophetic Messiah, and being baptized in that Name, Faith, or Profession, is so very evident as to need no farther Proof. The whole *Jewish Nation*, after they received the Doctrines of a Resurrection, and a future State, had confined eternal Salvation to their own Law and Religion; and though they admitted the devout Gentiles, or Proselytes of the Gate, as Candidates for Righteousness and the Kingdom of Heaven, yet they could not admit of the Possibility of their Salvation, or true justifying Righteousness, till they became Proselytes of Righteousness, and conformed to the whole Law. And now the *Nazarene* or *Christian Jews* made the Entrance still narrower, and excluded all the rest of that Nation, as well as the whole World besides, from the Hope of Salvation,

Salvation, who did not believe this Jesus to be the true national prophetic Messiah.

According to the Prophets, this *Jewish* Messiah was to be a mighty conquering Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom, by subduing all other Nations that had kept this People in Subjection, or would not now submit to their King. All the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* were to send up their Gifts and Offerings to *Jerusalem*, as his Subjects and Tributaries; and all the Merchants of the Earth were to employ their Ships, in bringing Home the scattered Tribes from all Parts of the Earth where they had been dispersed, and the Nation who should refuse this Obedience and Subjection to *Israel* and her King, was to be utterly destroyed. This Kingdom was to be a Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness to those who would submit to it, and all other Nations were to be cut off or reduced to a State of absolute Vassalage. This is the glorious triumphant Representation which the Prophets have given us of the Messiah's temporal Kingdom, and the vast Benefits which all other Nations were to derive from this chosen peculiar People of God; and which is all as opposite as Heaven and Earth, Light and Darkness, to every Thing that Christ said about his Church, and the Means of obtaining his heavenly everlasting Kingdom. But one would think, that Time and Providence long ago should have sufficiently unravelled this Secret, to convince any Man, that all this, from
first

first to last, was a mere Delusion, which that whole Nation, both Prophets and People, had been under; however when it comes about, it will prove a Revelation above Reason, which some People are much at a Loss for now.

It seems plain to me, that this national Delusion was founded in a Mistake concerning the Nature of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or the Covenant of Faith and Righteousness, which God made with *Abraham*, and, in him, with all Mankind; that he would always, in every Nation and Country, be the God, and exceeding great Reward, of all faithful and true Worshippers, or of all such as by a filial Love to, and fiducial Trust in, him, should recommend themselves to his Favour, by an uniform Course of sincere Obedience, Integrity, and a good Life. This Covenant between God and Man, which is founded in all Nature and Reason, that vain-glorious People took as an absolute Promise, or Prophecy, of what must come to pass among themselves, as the natural Seed of *Abraham*; and that no other Nation in Futurity could receive any Blessings from God, but what must be derived from them, as the Means or Channel of Conveyance; and this gross Error proved at last their Destruction, as it has destroyed almost all Sense and Reason in Religion ever since. But though they are finally dispersed and abandoned by God and Providence, yet we have still the same Sort of *peculiar People* depending upon absolute Covenants, Decrees, and Promises, and upon the
same

same Power of strong and faithful Presumption without any suitable personal Qualifications ; and they have still the same Resort to a vicarious Righteousness, or Justification by Proxy.

As to Prayers for the Dead, the Author seems to admit it, so far as I had urged it upon the Authority of the Apocalypse. I did not pretend the Christian *Jews*, so early as that, prayed for the Deliverance of the Souls of the dead Saints out of Purgatory, or any Place of Torments ; this was an Improvement long after under the Papal Hierarchy, or Church-Monarchy ; but they prayed for their full and final Reward, or Admittance into the Kingdom of Heaven, which they thought could not be till the Resurrection and final Judgment. In the mean while, they considered their Souls as hovering about their Tombs and Sepulchres, or under the Altar where they had formerly worshipped, and where St *John* saw them ; here they were considered as Eye and Ear-Witnesses to the Prayers made to and for them. And thus far, for ought I can see, this Author and I are agreed.

All that I had said, to shew that the *Jewish* Prophets, and the whole Nation expected a fifth Monarchy, or a glorious temporal Kingdom, under which these national Saints, or peculiar People, were to rule all Nations, and to have the Government of the Earth put into their Hands, the Author would turn into Figure, and into downright Nonsense. The whole of what he says about this has only this amount,

amount, that the prophetic Language and Stile were unintelligible, that led that whole Nation into a grand Delusion; and any Systematist now may put what Sense he will upon it. This is indeed the best Apology that has ever been made for those prophetic infallible Writers, and I believe the only Defence that could be made. But the worst of it is, that it will not hold good even in Allegory, or any Sort of Comparison, and when this whole Nation had been so grossly deluded by it, and all understood it for a temporal Kingdom, the rest of the World could receive no Benefit by it, and the Remains of that Nation to this very Day continue under the same Unbelief, or prophetic Faith, and cannot help deriding the strange Application that we make of their Prophecies. You might possibly convince the *Jews*, that they were under a general national Delusion; but it is impossible ever to convince them that they mistook their Prophets; and impossible for this Writer, by all his Shifts and Evasions, to convince me, that I had mistaken them. But as he is here only disposed to deal in *Figures*, I shall leave him till he is out of his *Mathematical* Way. I know something of Arithmetical and Geometrical Figures, but am not fit to deal with a Metaphysical and Divine Figurist, and therefore he may reserve this for those who are more capable of such Sort of Philosophy. For I am sure there can be nothing in Nature which such a *Chemist* would not be able to prove by *Figurative Divinity*.

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The Author has some other trite Observations upon what I had said about the Apocalypse. He observes that every Thing prophesied of in that Book, could not be then *shortly to come to pass*, or just at hand, because the End of the World is there spoken of. I had proved, and the Book itself proves it, that the second Coming of Christ, as the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah, was then just at hand, or *shortly to come to pass*. But between this Coming of Christ to judge the Nations, to restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, to make them the Lords of the World, to reduce all Nations to them, as Subjects and Tributaries, and in the mean Time to restore their antient Temple, Priesthood, and Sacrifices; I say, between all this and the End of the World, or final Consummation of all Things, when the whole Scene was to be removed from Earth to Heaven, there was to be an Interval of a Thousand Years, according to this Prophecy. But this Writer, who is better versed in prophetic Language and Learning than I am, will doubtless prove, that either all this has been accomplished already, or will be accomplished. But though I should be willing to give him Credit for what is past, I hope he will not expect it for all Time to come.

S E C T. X.

What the Author has offered concerning the sacrificial Scheme, imputed Righteousness, or Satisfaction, considered and replied to. The particular Marks of Imposture in the Mosaic Plan of Priesthood and Sacrifices. The Conclusion.

THE Author in his 16th and last Chapter, proceeds to consider some Objections which I had made to the common mediatorial Scheme, or the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction, so far as it has been generally understood and explained. I must own, that this is a turning Point, and almost the Hinge of the whole Controversy, and I shall therefore the more particularly consider all that he has offered about it. And when he had declaimed and rambled on for thirty Sheets together, it was Time to come to something at last.

Page 443. " I have now gone through the
 " several Objections of our pretended *Moral*
 " *Philosopher*, as far as they affect the Autho-
 " rity of the Holy Scriptures in general, whe-
 " ther of the Old Testament or the New.
 " It doth not properly come within my De-
 " sign to enter upon the Consideration of the
 " particular Doctrines of Christianity, espe-
 " cially

“ cially those which are controverted among
 “ Christians. I might therefore entirely pass
 “ by those Parts of our Author’s Book, where
 “ he pretends to set up for rectifying the Er-
 “ rors and Mistakes that have obtained among
 “ Christians, with Regard to *some of the*
 “ *Doctrines of the Gospel.*” This, with a little
 more to the same Purpose, is his Introduction
 to the only Point which he ought to have
 spoke to, and to have cleared up had he been
 able. This Writer has fully vindicated Chri-
 stianity as a *Revelation above Reason*, without
 entering into any of its particular disputed
 Doctrines, for that was not his Business, or any
 the least Part of his Design. But I would fain
 know of him, what Doctrines of Revelation
 above Reason there are which have not been,
 and are not now, disputed *among Christians?*
 If he had had any such Doctrines, he need
 not have writ two or three and thirty Sheets,
 to have squeezed them out, and not have
 done it at last. But it is plain, that he is only
 a general Advocate, for he knows not what,
 while he has nothing in particular to prove or
 defend. How far he has made good his *Ge-*
nerals, we have seen already; but now, Thanks
 be to Heaven, we are come at last to something
particular. He has fully and clearly vindicated
 the Authority of the Old and New Testaments
 as a *Revelation above Reason*, without defend-
 ing any particular Doctrine of that Kind, which
 he was not at all concerned to do, because
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they are all disputed *among Christians*; and yet he has faithfully discharged his Duty, and is your most obedient humble Servant, though he can do nothing for you.

Page 445, He gives a Definition of God's pardoning Mercy in these Words: " The true
 " Notion of Christ's Satisfaction, or Christ's
 " dying for our Sin, in general, is this, that
 " it is a Provision made by the Wisdom of
 " God, to dispense his Grace and Favour to-
 " wards guilty Creatures, in such a Way as
 " doth, at the same Time, secure the Majesty
 " of his Government with the Authority of
 " his Law, and shew forth his Justice and
 " Purity." I have nothing to object to this general Definition of *pardoning Mercy*, that it ought to be dispensed in a Way suitable to the Perfections of his Nature, and the Honour of his Government. And therefore I shall only consider how he brings a *Vicarious Sacrifice*, *Imputed Righteousness*, or Justification by Proxy, into it.

I had represented it as a perfect Inversion of all Reason and Rectoral Justice, to punish the Innocent for the Guilty, or to spare the Guilty for the undeserved Punishment of the Righteous. No doubt, but the most innocent Person in the World may be a great Sufferer on the Account, or by the Occasion, of wicked Men. But then he would not be said either to be punished for his own Sins, or to exempt others from Punishment who had really de-
 served

served it. But this Writer cannot see why the Innocent may not be punished for the Guilty, and the Guilty spared, or more favourably accepted, upon that very Account. But for my Part, I cannot help his Misunderstanding, and should not say much to illuminate a Man under such Darknes; and therefore I can give him no better Advice than to take off his Spectacles.

The great Difficulty here to be accounted for is, how the Sufferings of an innocent Person, whether we should call it Punishment, or Affliction, should make Satisfaction for the Sins of the Guilty? He seems to give up the Sufferings or Afflictions of Christ as penal, and cannot pretend to say that Merit or Demerit, Reward or Punishment, can be transferrable from one Person to another. How one Man may receive Benefit by the voluntary Sufferings of another, or how a whole Nation, or the whole World, may derive vast Advantages from the Sufferings and Hardships of a particular Person, I have shewn already; and this is clear and intelligible enough, without any Thing of this Author's most absurd, unintelligible, *mediatorial Scheme*. In this Man's Way of Thinking, if Christ had not fallen a Sacrifice to the popular Ignorance and Superstition, Rage and Malice of that Nation, the World could not have been saved, nor could there have been any Resurrection from the Dead, or Life to come. But is he thus far obliged to the ignorant wick-

ed *Jews*, and would now damn them to all Eternity for it? Would he now declaim against the Wickedness that saved the World? Suppose the *Jews* had all received Jesus as their national Messiah, worshipped him as God, and suffered him to die under the most universal Applause and Adoration, must the whole World then have been damned? It is astonishing to me, how Christian Divines can censure and condemn the *Jews* for doing a Thing that was necessary to be done for the Salvation of Mankind, and which God had before ordained and appointed to be done. Were they made such damnable Sinners for our Salvation? All this must follow, with much more which I might express with greater Energy, supposing the Death of Christ necessary to the Salvation of Mankind, and that we could have received no Benefit by him, as a Prophet and Restorer of Righteousness, unless he had offered a Sacrifice for us as a *Priest*. But there is not one Word in Scripture of Christ's dying to reconcile God to us, or to dispose him to be merciful to penitent Sinners, or to procure or merit Pardon upon our Repentance, or to manifest and display the Justice and Righteousness of God, and his Hatred of Sin. All this is mere Fiction and Forgery, and though it is Part of his School-Divinity, what he has learned and what he must teach, yet it is absolutely inconsistent with Christianity and with all Religion. But this Writer's Management here is perfectly

trifling

rifling and evasive, that is, as if he was resolved to say something, or seem to say something, for a Doctrine which he knew could not be defended. There is one Objection, Pretence, or Evasion, which he here brings, but what I had supposed and answered before, and therefore instead of answering it again, I must desire him to review once more what he has pretended to answer. It is plain that this sacrificial Scheme has been grounded upon the gross mistaken Notions of the *Jews* about their legal Propitiations and Atonements for Sin, and which the Christian *Jews* very early applied to the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ. But I have proved that there was no such Thing as any real Propitiation for Sin under the Law, and that no Sacrifice could be substituted for, or taken instead of legal Obedience. Those Sacrifices were a Part of that legal Obedience, and the most burdensome and unreasonable Part of it too; and therefore they could not possibly typify or represent any real Propitiation or Sacrifice for Sin. But as the *Jews* formerly depended on their Sacrifices and Atonements for Pardon with Repentance, so have the Gross of the Christian World ever since, and still do. And I believe it is impossible to preach, teach, or apply this Doctrine of imputed Merit and Righteousness in any Way whatever, so as not to have such a mischievous Effect in general, as encouraging Presumption, quieting Men in their Sins, and bearing off Repentance.

This Gentleman labours and sweats at the sacrificial Scheme, as a Mason would upon a Piece of Clock-work. He thinks there must needs be something more in it than I have made of it, and yet he knows not what to make of it himself. I had proved that there could be no such Thing in *Nature* as a Transmutation, Commutation, or Substitution of one Person, or Thing, for another, and that there was no such Thing under the *Law of Moses*. Merit and Demerit are incommunicable, personal Adjuncts, or Attributes, and making a Transfer here, is destroying all Nature, Reason, and governing Justice. I had proved that the Death of Christ was no otherwise voluntary, than as every righteous Person must chuse *Suffering* rather than *Sin*; and as he was to be the great Pattern and Exemplar of Righteousness to others, and to give a public authentic Witness, or Proof, to the only Way in which Men could be justified, accepted, and rewarded of God. And I would ask this Writer, whether Jesus was betrayed by *Judas* or not? Or whether he did not take all the prudential Care possible to avoid falling into the Hands of the *Jews* at that Time, and whether he did not seek this Deliverance earnestly with Tears, and in bloody Sweats? If this be so, it is plain, that he did not think his Death necessary to the Salvation of the World, and that there could have been no such prior Contract between God and him. Had he certainly
known

known the Intention of *Judas*, and what had been resolved upon at that very Time, and had he then gone into the Garden on Purpose to bring on the Event, and to resign himself, he might as well have gone in the Day, and resigned in open Court; and in this Case he could not have been betrayed, or have suffered any Thing by the Treachery of *Judas*, or the Malice of the *Jews*; but had his Death been criminal in them, he must have been an Accessory to it himself.

I think I had plainly proved that there was no such Thing as vicarious Sacrifices under the Law; or that the Life of a Beast was never substituted for the Life, Liberty, or any other Property, of a Man. The sacrificial Beast had been forfeited by Law before, and a Man's paying that Forfeiture did not excuse or exempt him from any other Mulct, Fine, or Penalty in Law. And I am the more sure of this, because the Author, after all his Toil and Struggle, has been able to give no Instance to the contrary. What was called *making the Atonement* by the Priest's sprinkling the Blood, could signify nothing but *declaring the Atonement*, or giving this open public and legal Notification of it, that the Person's Sacrifice was accepted, and that by this personal Act of Obedience to the Law, he stood acquitted in Law. It was in the Nature of a legal Discharge, that the Law by such an Offering, or personal Act, was satisfied to that Time. And

in like Manner, Jesus Christ by his Obedience to Death, and shedding his Blood upon the Cross, gave a public authentic Declaration or Notification of the Acceptableness of such personal Obedience, as the only Righteousness that God would accept or reward, as he himself was rewarded for it, and could not be excused from it. But this has no Relation at all to the common absurd, unintelligible, Notion of vicarious Sacrifice, or substituted Righteousness, which is all founded upon the grossest and worst Part of *Jewish* Ignorance, Presumption, and Superstition. If our Author does not like this Account of mine of *making Atonement*, i. e. *declaring or notifying the Atonement* or Acquittal in Law, by such or such an Act of *personal Obedience* to the Law, let him put any other Sense upon the Phrase, without introducing the grossest Absurdity, Imposture, and Superstition. And he must do this, or give up the whole Argument, so far as I am concerned in it. For the Dispute here between him and me, is only about Imputed Righteousness, Redundant Merit, Supererogation, or Vicarious Sacrifices; and if he can prove nothing of this, he might as well be silent for the future.

Dean *Prideaux*, in his Letter to the Deists, has proved that Christianity can be no Imposture, because it bears none of the natural Marks or Characters of Imposture, as every false Religion must. And he shews that these Marks
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and Signatures of Imposture are very evident in the Religion of *Mohammed*. But there is not one of the Dean's Marks and Characteristics of Imposture, but what might be applied with great Strength and Clearness to the *Mosaic* Oeconomy. I have had Occasion in going along to observe many of them, and, to take Leave of this Author, I shall here put the Chief of them altogether.

I. The whole Plan and Contrivance of this Polity was calculated and directed for the temporal carnal Interest, Wealth, and Power, of the Politician, by securing the Government for ever in his own Tribe and Family. And tho' *Levi* was cursed in *Jacob*, yet as the two Brothers happened to be of this Tribe, the Curse was now to be taken off, and the rest of the Nation reduced to such a State of Dependence on *Levi*, as was but little better than Vassalage. I have proved the legal Revenues payable to the Priesthood, could not amount to less than an annual Rent, or a third Part of the whole Produce, of the Lands, which had been the State of the Case in *Egypt*, and therefore this People had but exchanged one Bondage and Servitude for another; only as they had been Slaves to Foreigners before, they were now to be Slaves to their own Lords and Masters. Now as Power in a governed Society must follow Property, as this Tribe was scarce a fifth Part of any other Tribe, and not a fiftieth Part
of

of the whole, and as they had at least a third Part of the Property, it is plain that *Levi* must have been richer and more powerful than any other Tribe in the Proportion of 20 to 1; and consequently almost double in Wealth and Power to all the rest, and able to maintain a War against them.

2. In order to support and secure this exorbitant Wealth and Power in the Priesthood, two Things were absolutely necessary. *First*, That the Community of this Tribe should be dispersed up and down over the whole Country, and have their Towns and Cities, with the adjoining Land and Villages allotted them, among all the other Tribes. Had their Inheritance been thrown all together, it must have frustrated the grand Design of securing these Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings to the Lord. But by this Provision they were always and every where ready to make Observations, and give in their Informations of all stated or occasional Dues and Offerings; and at hand every where to act the Part of Informers, Apparators, Tything-Men, and Constables, and to take the most effectual Care the *Lord* might not be robbed of his Rights and Dues; and yet the Lord only was to be the Inheritance of this Tribe, though they had a greater proportional Share of the Lands than any other Tribe, and were so disposed of, that the whole Land was almost put into their Power. But
another

another Thing absolutely necessary to secure this *Inheritance of the Lord* was, that all Idolatry and Image-Worship should be punished with Death. For though this is perfectly repugnant to the Nature of Religion, and all true acceptable Worship of God, yet the local, tutelar God of *Israel*, who was in the Custody of the High-Priest, and to whom all the Sacrifices and Offerings were made; this God, I say, or God under this idolatrous Notion of him, could not have been worshipped in this Way, had not the Law enjoining it been guarded with such a Sanction.

3. And this shews plainly, that this Sort of instituted Worship was nothing but Superstition, Idolatry, and false Religion; and that it was not, and could not be, in Reality, the true God, but an Idol of human Policy and Contrivance, that was thus worshipped.

4. The Indulgence given under this Oeconomy to personal Intemperance, especially the the most predominant and prevailing Lusts of the Flesh, Drunkenness and carnal Concupiscence, or the excessive Use of Wine and Women, is another strong and glaring Mark of worldly carnal Policy. A Man might be as drunk as he would, and as often, without coming within the Verge of the Law, or suffering any legal Punishment for it. And any Man might keep as many Wives and Concubines

bines as he thought fit, and turn them off again at Pleasure, to take fresh ones, and glut his Lusts with the greatest Variety, and no body could call him to Account for it. He might put away his Wife by only giving her a Bill of Divorce under his Hand to discharge her from him; and this without assigning any Reason, or leaving the Woman any Remedy in Law, even though she should be ever so much abused and ill-treated. But what is still worse, a Man being moved with a jealous Mind, whether with or without a Cause, or whether real or only pretended, could put his Wife to the Trial of Jealousy, and procure a Priest to poison her, if he thought fit, and had received a valuable Consideration for it. The Case, in short, was this; when any Man was jealous of his Wife, and could prove nothing against her; or if he only pretended Jealousy, for this could not be known, he might put her to this Trial. He was to have her to the Priest, who was to bring her before the Lord, and put her to an Oath, called the *Oath of Cursing*, in which she was to take a Draught of the Priest's own preparing, and imprecate a Curse upon herself, that what she was about to take might cause her Belly to swell, and her Thighs to rot off, if she was guilty of the Crime she was suspected of; and then she was to take off the Draught which the Priest had prepared and brought her. This Draught is called the *holy Water*, the *Water of sprinkling*, and the *bitter and cursed Waters*; and

and, no doubt, it was in the Priest's Power to make it holy or cursed, bitter or sweet, innocent or poisonous, as he thought fit. But here are the plainest Marks of Imposture in the World. Had there been any miraculous Interposition in the Case, the Woman might have drank any common Water or Wine, at her own Choice, and the Effect would have been the same, where every Thing should have been done fairly and unexceptionably, without any Ground to suspect a Cheat or Imposture. But the Priest was to prepare and bring it himself, and then to sprinkle some of the Dust of the Sanctuary into it, as if the whole Magic and Mystery had lain in that. In this Case, the jealous Husband was not obliged to name the Person suspected, nor to declare the Grounds of his Suspicion; and the Law has made no Provision what must be done, supposing the Priest himself had been the suspected Person, and then he would doubtless have cleared the Woman, and proved her Innocency upon such a Trial. So that a married Woman could not be safe in playing the Whore, or committing Adultery, tho' ever so secret, with any but a Priest, and then she might be sure of being brought off upon any Trial of Jealousy in her Husband. But how far such a Law must have put every Man's Wife into the Power, and left them at the Devotion, of the Priest, I need not say, since the Thing is plain enough and speaks itself; and therefore shall only refer the Reader, for this Law, and the Trial
upon

upon it, to *Numb. v.* from *ver. 11.* to the End.

Such Marks and Symptoms of Divinity would have been thought very bad ones, had they been found in *Zoroaster*, *Confucius*, or *Mohammed*; but as they are only to be found in God's faithful Servant *Moses*, it would be the highest Presumption and Wickedness to say any thing against it. Such Things as these might look like Difficulties to a vulgar unassisted Eye, or to a Man not well acquainted with spiritual Optics and supernatural Chemistry; but they must be all clear and plain to any one who will but consider the mutable and variable Nature of Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong. It is true, there are many Things under the *Mosaic* Oeconomy which would not be right now, and which could not have been right for any Time before or since; but yet considering the different and variable Circumstances of Persons and Things, they might be all right then. It is true, that God thought fit to institute a Sacerdotal Government, to subject that Nation to the Power of the Priests, and to have his Name and theirs substituted indifferently for each other; and though this might be thought somewhat odd, had no positive Law intervened, yet it must be all right and reasonable, just and necessary, by divine Will and Appointment. And when God had thought fit to institute such a *Theocracy*, in which the High-Priest was to be his Vicegerent and Oracle,
and

and the rest of the Tribe his Court-Officers, and Servants in Livery; as this must be very burdensome and expensive to the Nation, it was but reasonable and fit that they should be indulged in some carnal Liberties and peculiar personal Enjoyments, the better to reconcile them to, and make them the more easy under, such a *divine Oeconomy*. And then as for Miracles, or the Exercise of a supernatural divine Power in Favour of one Nation, and by destroying other Nations, and declaring himself an Enemy to them for *Israel's* Sake, while this favourite People were as wicked and rebellious as any of the rest; though this may not seem agreeable to God's Wisdom, Justice, and Impartiality in his moral Government of the World, as a common Father and most righteous Judge; yet since God was pleased to fix a special Love upon this People, and make them his first-born and peculiar Delight: and since this is a Matter of immediate Inspiration and Revelation, it ought not to be doubted of, or called to the Bar and Judgment of Reason and common Sense. Some, perhaps, may think that I am only jesting, and entertaining myself in a Way of Merriment; but I must profess seriously that I take this to be the true Nature, Scope, and Consequence, of all our Author's Arguments and Reasonings against the *Moral Philosopher*; and as such I must leave it till I hear from him again.

But

But to conclude; I had laid it down as an agreed established Point, both in Reason and Scripture, that God, in the last Day, will judge *every Man according to his Works, or according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether they have been good or evil*: And I wish our Author had here declared himself freely, whether he believes this Doctrine or not, or whether he has not some Salvo for it *under the Gospel*. He talks all along as if he did not believe, that Men *under the Gospel* should be judged according to their Works, or the Deeds done in the Body, but according to their last Professions, Vows, and Promises, or the Temper they should happen to die in. This Writer must of Course be a Preacher of Righteousness, and would not say directly, that Christ died to satisfy for the Breach of his own Laws, and consequently to nullify their Obligation and destroy his own Authority; and yet he seems to be under some Difficulty, how to reconcile any Scheme of personal Obedience to his Notions of a Vicarious Sacrifice, Imputed Righteousness, and Justification by Proxy. I hope he will clear up this a little farther in his next. But in the mean while, a little more Modesty and Charity might better become a Preacher of the Gospel. He ought to tell us what that *Faith* is which he opposes to *Infidelity*, and what that Repentance on which he would ensure *Gospel-Pardon*, before he makes so free with his *Imputations of Deist, Free-Thinker, Infidel,*

Infidel, Enemy to Revelation, &c. I wish him as well as he can me, and should as soon pray for him ; but I do not know that I can have any Thing to answer for in writing against him, nor could I, perhaps, ever be convinced of this, unless I should have it by Inspiration, or immediate Revelation. But however I could never desire the Spirit of this Writer, but should rather pray for a little more Partiality, and a better Temper : And when he writes again, I hope he will take more Care to distinguish between *Religion* and *Superstition*, or between the internal spiritual Worship of the one true God, and the external, carnal, and bodily Worship of an Idol or false God ; or, which is the same Thing, I should advise him for ever hereafter to distinguish well between *Judaism* and *Christianity*.

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LETTER

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E U S E B I U S.

S I R,

YOUR *True Christian's Defence*, &c. not coming to Hand, till I had almost finished my Answer to *Sophronius*, I have now but little more Time than just to acknowledge my receiving it, and thank you for the Favour and Civility of it. We had long expected the Performance of your Promise to *Theophanes* about two Years ago, that you would espouse his Cause, and make good the Deficiency of his Reasonings. But as you have now at last taken his Place, and he is willing to resign it, I am highly pleased that a Gentleman of so much Learning, Candour, and good Sense, has undertaken to supply all his Defects and Failures. I shall be always

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proud,

proud, *Eusebius*, of your farther Acquaintance and Correspondence, and hope to let you see, in the Course of this Debate, that *Theophanes* was not so weak a Man, nor so much a Tool of mine, as you would make him. I have largely considered and debated already, in my foregoing Reply to *Sophronius*, the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Revelation above Reason. And as you have offered nothing new upon this Subject, I may be excused in passing the more slightly over that Part of your Argument, and not repeating what I had urged before. I take the rational Evidence of Religion to be clear, strong, and universal, and what Mankind could never have overlooked and lost, had not the several Pretensions to Prophecy and oracular Revelation blinded and misled them, and carried them off from the first and most obvious Principles of Reason. But your authoritative, positive Evidence, is what the far greater Part of the World never knew any Thing of, or are ever likely to know; nor can they who have it, or pretend to it, agree about it in any one single Point.

But as you have ventured to go farther than *Sophronius*, or any learned Man before you, in giving us a distinct categorical List of Fundamentals, or the Essentials of Christianity, as distinct from the Religion of Nature and Moral Principles of Reason, what you have offered about this, will deserve a more distinct and particular Consideration; as likewise what you have offered concerning the prophetic

Messiahship of Jesus Christ, and the literal Accomplishment of the *Jewish* Prophecies in him. These two Points are doubtless Matters of great Importance, as they include almost every Thing of Consequence in the whole Debate. And therefore a brief Discussion of these with you, will put an End, *Eusebius*, to all the Trouble I design to give you at present.

You distinguish very well between the *Fundamentals of Christianity*, and Things *necessary to Salvation*, and thereby own, that the Fundamentals of Christianity are not necessary to Salvation. But surely the Fundamentals of *true Religion* are necessary to Salvation, and therefore that Sort of Christianity, the Fundamentals of which are not thus necessary, cannot be the true Religion. I doubt you here confound *Fundamentals* with Non-necessaries; for to say that the Fundamentals of any Religion, whether natural or revealed, are not necessary to *Salvation*, is to destroy all Religion, and to confound Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell.

When we say that Christianity is not necessary to Salvation, or that Men may be saved without it, the Word *Christianity* must be taken in a very narrow, limited, and improper Sense, so as to exclude the Religion of Nature, or that true justifying Faith and Righteousness which had always subsisted, which was not at all altered by the Law, and which was only revived or restored by the Gospel. When you

have excluded the true justifying Faith and Righteousness out of your Idea and Definition of *Christianity*, it can be scarce worth while to dispute any longer about it. I am sure, that Saving Faith and Righteousness which *St Paul* preached in Opposition to the Law, as revealed and manifested by the Gospel, was necessary to Salvation and Acceptance with God. And according to that Apostle, this justifying Faith and Righteousness had been always the same, and the only Condition upon which Men had been approved and accepted of God both before and under the Law. Nay the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision went much farther, and declared the actual and explicit Faith and Profession of Christ, or Mens believing in Jesus as the true Messiah, and being baptized in his Name, necessary to Salvation: That there was *no other Name*, or Faith, *under Heaven by which Men could be saved*; and that they only who thus believed and were baptized should be saved, but all others must be damned. This was plainly the original *Nazarene Faith*, but this, I hope, *Eusebius*, is no Part of your *Christianity*. It is no great Credit to any of our scholastic Schemes of Religion, that the most learned Men are continually forced to elude and evade such plain express Texts, and in such a Manner as amounts to almost a downright denial of the Gospel, as first preached and taught by the *Nazarene Jews*. I take the filial Love of God, and a fiducial Trust in him, with the proper Fruits and Effects of it in brotherly

therly Love and Beneficence to Mankind, to be that Gospel-Righteousness and Revelation of Christ which St *Paul* preached.

I wish, *Eusebius*, you had been a little more explicit, and told us plainly what those Doctrines are, the Proof of which must depend upon Miracles. You would not, I presume, say, that the Being of a God, his Natural and Moral Perfections, and the eternal, immutable, Obligations of Moral Truth and Reason, must depend on the Proof of Miracles; for they certainly depend on a prior and much clearer Evidence and Method of Proof. And when these are all thrown out of the Account, as not peculiar to Christianity, I cannot see what you would have left to boast of, or what Stead the Miracles could stand you in. If there are any Doctrines of Revelation which were otherwise above and beyond the Comprehension and Investigation of Reason, you ought to name them, clear up the true adequate Notion of them, and then try how far the Miracles will go in the Proof of them. But the Gentlemen in your Way of Thinking have been so far from doing this, that scarce any two of them are agreed in any one Doctrine of pure Revelation, or what it is that they are going about to prove by Miracles. But is it not strange, that Revealed Religion should be still left so much in the Dark, as to want a new Revelation to discover it? You know very well what the Doctrines of Revelation were at the Reformation, in the *Antinomian* Scheme of *Luther*,
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Calvin, and the other Reformers; but I wish, *Eusebius*, you could tell me so well what they are now. We are continually put off with one general loose indeterminate Proposition which can signify nothing, that Christianity is an immediate Revelation from God, and that Miracles are the true genuine Proof or Evidence of it. But I hope the Cause of Christianity is not come to this.

It is plain, that the bare Exertion of Power can have no natural Connexion with Truth, Wisdom, or Goodness; since that Power, how great soever, might be exerted by an evil Being, for any Thing we could know to the contrary, or there might be some Collusion and Deception in the Case which we could not find out. And then, if any Impostor or Impostors should pretend, that these Miracles were wrought in Confirmation of such and such Doctrines, which might be all false and forged, the Cheat might pass unavoidably and beyond Detection: For if Miracles are the proper natural Proof of the Truth of Doctrines; and if the Nature and Reason of the Doctrines themselves, such as they would have appeared to the Understanding, antecedent to the Miracles, is not to be considered, or taken into the Account, there is no Imposture, or false Religion in the World, which might not be confirmed in the same Way; and it would be arguing against Fact and common Experience to say, that God, in his Wisdom and Goodness, could never suffer any such Cheat or Imposture from Miracles
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to pass, without controlling them by more and greater Miracles set against them ; for it is certain that God has suffered, and still does suffer, the greatest Part of the World to be thus deluded : And it is evident, from all History, the Priests and Politicians, of all Religions, have ever gained their Point, and established their different Schemes of Superstition among the People, by the Artifice and Pretence of Miracles, Revelation, and Prophecy. Nor is it possible, even under the Gospel itself, ever to guard against such Imposture, since the Ecclesiastics, in all Countries, have their different and opposite Schemes of Revealed Religion, and all equally proved by Miracles and immediate Revelation.

The Miracles wrought by *Moses* in *Egypt*, were plainly a Trial of Power between his God and the Gods of *Egypt* ; and though *Moses* here got the Victory, and proved his God to be stronger than theirs, yet this did not, and could not, prove him to be the only one true God, nor were the *Egyptians*, or *Israelites* either, convinced of this ; for *Moses's* own People no sooner got over the Red-Sea, and come to any settled Station, but they made a Calf, and ascribed their whole Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*. It was certainly a destroying Angel which was sent with *Moses*, for after the *Egyptians* had been all destroyed and drowned in the Red-Sea, the *Israelites* themselves, who had been thus miraculously delivered, were miraculously destroyed too in the Wilderness ; all that went out of
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Egypt, and were then upon the Lists, from 20 Years old, and upward, excepting only two Men. And when this Generation had been cut off by Vengeance, the next was to maintain the bloodiest and cruelest War that ever had been known. The God of *Moses* therefore, for he made him, and fixed him in the Sanctuary, as the local and tutelar God of *Israel*, might justly be stiled the Lord of Hosts, or God of War; and under this Notion, the People always worshipped him for Protection against their Enemies, and Victory in the Field; and whenever he disappointed them in this, they presently fell to worshipping some other Gods, in Hopes of better Success, till they had disappointed them too, and then they would return to the Worship of their own God again. In all this it is plain that they worshipped nothing but Power. But Power thus continually employed for Devastation, War, and Destruction, carried no great Appearance of divine Power, which is always kind and beneficent; and therefore we find the Miracles, wrought by Christ and his Apostles, were of a quite different Nature and Kind from those of *Moses*, and they proclaimed and promoted Peace as much as he did War.

The true End of all Power, whether ordinary or extraordinary, is to do good; and where Power is thus employed, it proves the Righteousness of the Person, and the Goodness of his Temper and Intention as a Friend to Mankind; and this Jesus Christ, the great and holy
Prophet

Prophet of our Profession, gave in a higher and more remarkable Degree than any other Person had ever done: And this certainly cleared his Character and resolved the great Question then, Whether Jesus was a true Prophet with Authority from God, or an Impostor and Deceiver. All his Miracles, and the Holiness of his Life, proved that his Power was from God, and not from the Devil, which had been the Charge against him. And this was all that was necessary to make Way for his Doctrines, which wanted nothing but a cool and sober hearing and impartial Consideration; and then they brought their own Credentials with them as from God, by their intrinsic native Force and Energy upon the Understandings and Consciences of Men. It was this Power of Truth upon the Conscience, which enraged the Scribes and Pharisees so much against him, who could not part with their Wealth and Dominion, for the Sake of such mortifying self-denying Doctrines.

But that the Power of working Miracles, however employed, and though directed to the best Ends and Purposes in the World, cannot prove the Infallibility of the Persons, or that all their Doctrines, and their whole Practice in Religion were grounded upon Revelation and divine Authority, is as evident as any thing can be of an historical Nature. I have largely, and I think clearly, proved, in my foregoing Answer to *Sophronius*, alias *Leland*, that the whole Circumcision, or all the Apostles, Elders,

Elders, and Brethren of that Denomination, continued the Use of Circumcision, and adhered to the whole Law, both moral and ritual, as long as they lived, or at least as long as the Temple was standing, and they had any Priesthood and Sacrifices subsisting. If the Obligation therefore of this Law had been nullified and set aside by the Death of Christ, or by the Revelation of the Spirit afterward, these Apostles and Brethren knew nothing of it: And that they continued this Practice all down, is plain from what happened to *St Paul*, in his last Journey to *Jerusalem*, when he was seized there and committed to Prison for two Years, and then sent to *Rome*. The other Apostles prevailed with him to go into the Temple, and there sacrifice, and purify himself according to the Law, thereby, if possible, to satisfy and appease the People: For *thou seest, Brother*, say they, *how many Thousands there are here that believe, and they are all zealous of the Law*. *St Paul* complied with this now, and at other Times, as the Law of his Country, and a Matter of Liberty, as he often declares; but the Christian *Jews* obeyed, as a necessary Obligation upon them in point of Religion and Conscience, and *St Paul* could never bring them off from it, as thus considered. Now if the necessary Obligation of the Law, as a divine Institution, then remained, as they thought it did, it must be in Force still, as much as ever, to the *Jews*; and how then can Christians pretend to convert them, and bring them off from
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the Law upon any Foot of Revelation? But if it had been then repealed and set aside, as no longer binding, these Apostles and Brethren must have been under a very gross Error and Delusion in this Case, notwithstanding their Power of working Miracles: and besides, it is very plain, that they all along retained the strong national Prejudice of a temporal Kingdom, which they expected at that Time, or in that very Generation: And St *John's* Apocalypse contains a Revelation of Things then just at hand, and which were very shortly to come to pass. These Considerations, *Eusebius*, with others, which you will find in my foregoing Reply to *Sophronius*, are a strong Proof to me, that we cannot safely depend on Miracles for the certain Truth of Doctrines, or Infallibility of Persons, any farther than the Nature, and Reason, and moral Fitness of the Doctrines themselves will go; and then the Proof from Miracles must be superseded by a prior and more incontestible Evidence.

But if one should grant all that you contend for relating to Miracles, and immediate Revelation, we should be never the nearer to an Agreement about Revealed Religion. Every Man's wrong Head is his Conscience, and his Opinion or Imagination is Revelation to him; and then he has all the Miracles of Christ and the Apostles to prove the infallible Truth and Certainty of his own Mistakes and Errors. But, for my part, *Eusebius*, I am almost out of Conceit with *School-Divinity*. For, pray, what are
you

you and I now the wiser for all the vast laborious Works and Labours of the Learned from the Beginning of Christianity to this Day? Do we understand the Doctrines of Christ better now than we did above 600 Years ago? Or if not, what are we the better for all the Blood and Treasure spent upon it, with the Loss of almost all Peace and Charity? But you will say, that I only put these Questions, because I am quite out of the Case, and cannot share in the Profits; and, for ought I know, there may be too much Truth in this; for nothing but Darkeness could make a Man see Daylight, as you know nothing but being out of Place could open a Man's Eyes so far as to enable him to discern the Corruptions and Abuses of Men in Power. But, methinks, *Eusebius*, the Argument between you and me might be brought into a narrow Compass, and put to a short Issue, without interrupting your more general Design of writing a complete System of Polemical Divinity, so far as it concerns the Controversy with the Deists. You have only three Things to make good against me: First, That Christianity is a Revelation above Reason. Secondly, That Miracles are the proper genuine Proof of its Doctrines. And Thirdly, That those Doctrines must be very plain and clear to every honest Enquirer. If you could prove all, or any thing of this, you would satisfy me; and then, perhaps, you might have the less to do with your other Deistical Adversaries. But I
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do not pretend to over-rule or direct you in any thing of this, you must take your own Way as I shall mine.

But farther, it seems plain to me, from the History itself, that the Miracles of Jesus were not wrought with any such Design, or View, as proving himself to be the Jewish Messiah. Had this been the Case, he would certainly have chosen to work those Miracles in *Jerusalem* itself, and in their chief Towns and Cities, before the Priests, Rulers, and principal Inhabitants, which must undoubtedly have convinced them; but instead of this, he kept himself as much as possible in the most remote and desert Parts of the Country, and studiously avoided any popular Concourse of the People. And when any great Multitude of the Messiah-Men had found him out any where, and flocked about him, after he had taught and instructed them in the great important Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteousness, and exhorted them to Patience and Contentment in their Conditions, he would send them away without giving them any Grounds to think him their Prophetic national Messiah, or that he was come to restore the Kingdom of *David*. And when he had thus dismissed one Company, he would withdraw himself privately to some other Place, to avoid any such popular Resorts and Gathering of the People, till they chanced to find him out, and crowd about him again, and so from Time to Time. Had these Miracles been wrought to prove that Jesus was the Messiah,

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siah, or King of *Israel*, and Restorer of the Nation, according to the Prophets, they would certainly have been wrought chiefly upon Unbelievers, and in their Sight and Presence, for their Conviction ; but the contrary to this is evident from the whole Story. None could receive the Benefit of those miraculous Cures, but such as had a strong invincible, though groundless, Persuasion or Faith in him before, of his being the Messiah, in the popular national Sense. When our Saviour went up last to *Jerusalem*, he intended to have been there privately and undiscovered, as at other Times, but the Populace had found him out before he came to the City ; and the popular Madness being now ripe, and the Enthusiasm at the Height, they set him on an Ass, and led him in Triumph through *Jerusalem*, proclaiming him the King of *Israel* : And this Time the distracted Rabble kept about him, and guarded him for several Days successively, while he preached openly in the Temple and chief Places of public Resort ; and, during this Time, the Rulers dared not lay Hands on him for Fear of the People, who had made him their King. Now during all this Time, while he preached daily in the Temple, and other public Places, he gave no Suspicion, of his being the Person the Populace took him for, or that he had any the least Pretensions to the Kingdom ; he preached Repentance, Mortification, Self-denial, and a heavenly Mind, and endeavoured to prepare them not for a Temporal but an eternal Kingdom. And many

of the Priests and Rulers, as St *John* tells us, believed on him, that is, they believed in him as a true Prophet from God, and as a most holy Man, but not as the national Messiah, or Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom, which he made no Claim or Pretension to; nor could any wise considerate Man at that Time think that any such Character could belong to him: But the divine irresistible Power of his Doctrines upon the Heart and Conscience, and the most exemplary Purity and Holiness of his Life, afforded a stronger Conviction of his being a true Prophet, and having Authority from God to preach such Doctrines, than all the Miracles in the World could have done, had they been Eye-Witnesses to them, as they were not. And when he was now pressed and importuned to shew some Sign, or work some Miracle, which, doubtless, they had heard much Talk of, by those who had proclaimed him King, he absolutely refused it; though one would think the Conviction of such Unbelievers required Miracles more than the Confirmation of those who were too strong Believers before, and whose Faith, as is very plain, had no good Foundation: Yet he is made to declare, that no Sign should be given, or Miracle wrought, for the Conviction of that *wicked and adulterous Generation*, but the Sign of the Prophet *Jonah*, &c. Which Passage in *Matthew*, as it stands in our present Gospel, seems plainly to have been an Interpolation, because it would be a Contra-

dition to the whole History, as given by himself, and by all the other Evangelists. For Jesus did not *continue three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth, as Jonah had done in the Whale's Belly*; and that no other Sign should be given, or Miracle wrought, to convince that *wicked Generation*, could not be true, if that *very Generation* had such vast Numbers of the most astonishing Signs and Miracles to convince them, publickly done before their Eyes.

But if these Miracles prove any thing, they must prove that Jesus was the Prophetic Messiah, or the King of *Israel*, and Founder of a glorious temporal Kingdom, according to the Prophets. For this they are all urged, and to this single Purpose they were at first recorded and transmitted to us. This was the Faith of Healing, and no Man could have the Benefit of those Cures without such a Faith. And what that Faith was, or in what Sense the distracted, misguided Populace believed in him as the Messiah, is evident from their leading him in Triumph through the City, and proclaiming him King.

I had urged, that the prophetic Messiah of the *Jews* was to be a temporal Prince, and a great Conqueror; that he was to restore the Kingdom to the House of *David*, and re-establish an universal Empire and Dominion over all Nations; which he could not possibly do without subduing the *Romans, Greeks, Egyptians*, and all Nations who held this People in Captivity. And I had compared this Kingdom of

the *Jewish* Messiah, with the Kingdom of Christ which was founded not in worldly Power and Dominion, but in Humility and Poverty, in Mortification, Self-denial, Persecution, and many Tribulations, through which Men were to obtain, not worldly Wealth and Power, but a heavenly everlasting Kingdom after a general Resurrection, and final decisive Judgment. And this, I thought, must be directly contray to any Messiahship or Kingdom, which the Prophets had ever mentioned one Word of.

But since you are pleased to blame me, *Eusebius*, as mistaking, or misrepresenting, the Nature of this *Jewish* Messiahship and Kingdom, I must debate a Matter of such Importance a little farther with you, especially as I find this is a fundamental Point between you and me, and what must turn the Ballance of the whole Account, to one Side or the other.

The Prophet *Isaiab*, in the sixtieth Chapter of that Book, has collected and put together the whole Character of the Messiah, and Description of his Kingdom, as it had been delivered occasionally, and in part, by himself and other Prophets before this : And I think it is plain, from the Text and Context, that this Prophecy was delivered after the *Assyrian* Captivity of *Israel*. But as this is not very material, I should not enter into any Dispute about it, but hear what the State of that Nation was to be under the Messiah. *Lift up thine Eyes round about, and behold all these are gathered, and come to thee ; thy Sons shall come from afar, and thy Daughters shall*

shall be nourished at thy Side. Then thou shalt see and shine, thine Heart shall be astonished and enlarged, because the Fulness of the Sea shall be covered, and the Riches of the Gentiles shall come unto thee : The Multitude of Camels shall cover thee, and the Dromedaries of Midian and of Ephah ; all they of Sheba shall come ; they shall bring Gold and Incense, and shew forth the Praises of the Lord. All the Sheep of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee, the Rams of Nebaioth shall serve thee ; they shall come up to be accepted upon my Altar, and I will beautify the House of my Glory.— Surely the Isles shall wait for me, and the Ships of Tarshish as at the Beginning, that they bring thy Sons from far, and their Silver and their Gold with them.—The Sons of Strangers shall build up thy Walls, and their Kings shall minister unto thee.—Thy Gates shall be open continually, neither Day nor Night shall they be shut, that they may bring unto thee the Riches of the Gentiles, and their Kings may be brought. For the Nation and Kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, and those Nations shall be utterly destroyed.—The Sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come and bow unto thee, and all that despised thee shall fall down at the Soles of thy Feet, and shall call thee the City of the Lord, Zion the holy one of Israel.—Thou shalt also suck the Milk of the Gentiles, and suck the Breasts of Kings.—For Brass will I bring Gold, and for Iron I will bring Silver, and for Wood Brass, and for Stones Iron. I will also make thy Government Peace, and thy Exactors Righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard

heard of within thy Land, neither Desolation nor Destruction within thy Borders. But thou shalt call Salvation thy Walls, and Praise thy thy Gates. Thy People also shall be all righteous, they shall possess the Land for ever. Is this now, *Eusebius*, a Description of the mortifying self-denying State of the Church of Christ upon Earth; or are these the Trials, Temptations, Persecutions, and various Exercises of Faith and Patience, by which Men must obtain the Kingdom of Heaven? To imagine or expect such a State upon Earth would be the grossest Enthusiasm, and to suppose or conceive of any such State of Things in Heaven, must be absurd and contradictory; and yet hard is the Case, your *School-Divinity* must force you, some Way or other, to apply all this to Christianity, and the Gospel-Dispensation; a higher State of temporal Felicity and Glory cannot be conceived or expressed, than what *Isaiab* here describes and promises with Regard to that Nation; nor could any thing be more suitable to their vain Hopes and carnal Wishes. But was that Prophet now living, and knew what had happened from that Time to this, in the Conduct of Providence, I believe he would give up all his Prophecies, and become a Christian Deist. Time, *Eusebius*, is commonly thought to be the great Revealer of Secrets, and many Things are clear Day-light and Revelation to us now, that were all Mystery and Darknes to former Ages. Could *Isaiab* have foreseen what would have happened to his Nation within a 1000

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Years after his Death, I fancy he would scarce have flattered them with universal Empire, and a Dominion over the whole Earth; and to imagine him inspired with the Knowledge of all Futurity to the End of the World, is a Point of Faith beyond my Reach, even though you should reckon me an Infidel for it.

But the Truth is, that neither *Isaiab*, nor any other Prophet, before or under the *Babylonish* Captivity, ever spoke one Word of a general Resurrection, a final Judgment, and a consequent future State of eternal Happiness and Glory in Heaven, for good Men. They only prophesied of a more righteous Dispensation of Providence in future Generations, whatever might happen at present, and that God's Promise to *Abraham*, which they understood to be absolute, would at last be made good to that Nation. But had they known, or believed, any thing of a future Recompence and Reward, they would not thus have comforted and buoyed up the Nation with the bare Hopes of better Times, and greater Prosperity to their Seed and Issue in future Generations, when they, who had suffered all, and lived in such calamitous Times, were never to be the better for it. Had they believed a Resurrection and future State of Retribution, they would never have influenced and impressed the People with such vain wordly and carnal Hopes. They would doubtless have told them, directly and plainly, that whatever the Dispensation of Providence towards them might be in this Life, from first to last, yet they who re-
tained

tained their Virtue and Fidelity, should be abundantly recompensed hereafter, by the future everlasting heavenly Reward. But how their later Prophets, *Daniel* and *Esdra*s, came to take this into their Scheme, which had never been done before, and upon what Occasion the *Jewish* Writers afterward are so plain and direct in it, might have remained a Mystery, had not Dr *Hyde* given us so good an Account of the *Persian* Religion, and did we not know that the *Jewish* Nation were subject to the *Persians* for upwards of 200 Years. But I think I have said enough to clear up this Matter, *Eusebius*, especially to a Gentleman of your Learning and Discernment.

The Prophet *Daniel*, who was the last of the Canonical Scripture-Prophets, by at least 100 Years, as I place it, supposes a general Resurrection from the Dead, and a future State; but then he makes the temporal Kingdom, spoken of by the more antient Prophets, to precede it, and gives the Government of the World to his own Nation in the latter Days, when the Saints should rule the Earth. And this Millenarian Scheme St *John* follows, with some Improvements, in his Apocalypse, if he was the Author of that Book, as I presume he was. But I hope, *Eusebius*, you will not put the Credit and Truth of Christianity upon this Foot, and make what is to come a Proof of what is past; though I must own, that in one Part of your Book, you seem a little too much inclined to it; but this to me is plain, that the Miracles,

as first induced, and urged by the original *Nazarene Jews*, either prove the temporal Kingdom of Christ, and the universal Empire and Dominion of that Nation, or else they prove nothing; and I bar your making the future Accomplishment of this, a Proof of the Miracles themselves.

St *Paul* I believe understood the Grounds and Principles of Christianity, and where to fix the Proof of it, as well as any Man can do now. And yet in the several Defences and Apologies which he made for himself and his Religion before the *Roman* Judges, and in their open Courts, he does not mention one Word of Miracles wrought by Jesus in his Life-time, or by himself and the other Apostles afterwards, but lays the whole and sole Stress upon the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead, as a sure Evidence that God had highly exalted him, and given him all Power of Judgment in the spiritual Kingdom. But had St *Paul* known then as much as we do now, he could not have omitted the Argument from the Miracles, to prove Christ's Messiahship, especially when it was so directly to his Purpose, when he was under Safe-guard and Protection, and when he might boldly have appealed to the whole Country, both *Jews* and *Romans*, for the Truth, Certainty, and Notoriety of the Facts. But the Apostle knew very well, that this must have ruined the whole Cause, had he espoused the Evidence of the *Jewish* Mob, or the Messiah-Men of that Age, who by leading Jesus in
Triumph

Triumph through the City, and proclaiming him King, had set him up as a Pretender, and an Enemy to *Cæsar*, to whom he was now appealing. *St Paul* therefore took the right Way, and put the Proof of Christianity, or of an universal spiritual Kingdom, upon the right Foot, and the only Foot that could support it.

As soon as these *Nazarene Jews*, or *Messiah-Men*, understood that *Jesus* was crucified and dead, they gave up all their Hopes in him, and Expectations from him. *We trusted this was the Man who should have saved Israel*; but now it was all over. They had learned nothing from him as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteousness, they knew no better than before how to obtain an heavenly Inheritance, but all their worldly Hopes were vanished, the Kingdom was lost, and nothing else could be worth saving. And hence, when the Women who went first to the Sepulchre, came and told them that *Jesus* was risen from the Dead and alive again, they looked upon it at first as a mere Imagination or idle Tale, and could not believe it. But as soon as they came to be convinced, they assumed their old Hopes and Prejudices again, and now he was the *Messiah* and Restorer of the Kingdom as before. But this does not well agree with the many plain, express Declarations which *Jesus* had made to them while he was living, and conversing among them, that he must die and should rise again on the third Day. However, I would not press you with this, *Eusebius*, the Phænomenon is
visible

visible enough, and every Man must see it in his own Light, and account for it as well as he can.

But now they immediately set themselves to preach and proclaim him as the Messiah in their own national Sense, and confined Salvation to this Name. *There was now no other Name given under Heaven by which Men could be saved.* And that they meant by this an actual explicit Faith in him, or that they who thus believed, and were baptized into his Name, should be saved, and they who did not should be damned, is too evident to need Proof. And you know, *Eusebius*, for I appeal to a very good Judge, that the primitive Catholics, or *Jewish* Hierarchy, all down, confined Salvation to their own Communion, or to the true visible Church; and that they made Heresy, Schism, or Episcopal Disobedience, to be not only a damnable, but unpardonable Sin.

But it highly concerns every Christian, and especially every Christian Divine, who is appointed to teach and instruct others, to distinguish well between *Religion* and *Superstition*, and not to confound one with the other, which might make the best Religion in the World, the very worst and most mischievous, as has generally happened in Fact. And as the Christian Religion is the most amiable and beneficent, so Christian Superstition is the most odious and destructive. Religion is clear and rational, pure and peaceable; but Superstition is obscure and sensitive, brutish and furious; the one, like the
Sun,

Sun, diffuses its vital Heat and Influences through the whole World; but the other is a baneful Poison extracted from the gross Impurities of different Climates, and accommodated to the constitutional Weakness of this or the other Country; Religion warms the Heart by the Light of the Understanding, but Superstition scorches and burns up the Soul with the dark Fire of ignorant blind Zeal. In short, one is the Perfection and Beauty, and the other the Misery and Shame of human Nature. But I would not have you think, *Eusebius*, that I am preaching; I troubled you with a long Sermon once in the *Moral Philosopher*, but I shall never do it more.

Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners, by restoring the true justifying, immortalizing Righteousness, by which *Abraham*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, and all good Men, from the Beginning of the World, had been approved and accepted of God. And this I should think of infinite Advantage to Mankind, so far as the Benefit extended. But this it seems will not do in *School-Divinity*. If you had lost the Sun, you would not be at all be-friended by restoring and re-instating it in its Place again, unless you had a new Sun just created for you, that might be more luminous and glorious; or if you had lost your Eye-sight, it would be of no Advantage to you to cure your Blindness, and recover you to the natural Use of your Eyes, unless you could have new supernatural Sense and Faculty of seeing given you. But I should

should rather thank God for what I have, than pretend to what I have not, and cannot have. And this Affectation of supernatural Light, *Eusebius*, in my Opinion, is nothing but Darkness, and I must always think so, till you can make me wiser. I am sure, that I should be very glad to receive any Knowledge or Instruction from you, and do not apprehend, that I have the least Prejudice against being farther enlightened by so good a Friend. And though I have now but little more Time or Room to spare, and cannot enter far into Particulars, yet I hope to let you see that I am not obstinately bent in Error.

You spend your first Chapter in a very laborious, and, as I should think, needless Enquiry, into what I should mean by the Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things. But I can assure you, that I meant the same Thing by it that Dr *Clarke* does, while he grounds the whole of Natural Religion upon this Principle; and you might certainly have taken it in the most extensive Sense, since I had made none of those particular Distinctions and Restrictions which you have contrived and found out for me. I take every Thing to be morally true, reasonable, and fit, whether in Principle or Practice, which by any rational Evidence to the Understanding, arising from different Relations and Circumstances of Persons and Things, shall appear to be connected with, and necessarily relative to, our moral Rectitude, Perfection, and true Happiness. And it is hard to think,

think, *Eusebius*, that you should be so much at a Loss about my Meaning, while you argue so strenuously against it, and labour to prove that this Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness, cannot be the only Criterion of true Religion, or of the Will of God, concerning our Duty and Happiness; nay, and while you would persuade us that this is properly no Mark or Criterion at all of divine Truth, or of Truth as coming from God. But you would not, I presume, have said so much against a Principle which you could not understand.

As to the other Criterion of divine Truth, and of Revelation above Reason, *i. e.* *Miracles*, which you set up in Opposition to the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, I think I have said enough to shew that it is utterly precarious; that we have no certain Rule of Judgment, whereby to distinguish a true Miracle from a false, or a Reality from a bare Appearance, and that abstracting from the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of the Things themselves, we may be liable in this Way to all the Deception and Delusion in the World. And though you have taken so much Pains to settle the Definition of a Miracle, and to correct the Mistakes of other learned Men about it; yet I must own myself as much at a Loss as ever, how to judge of Miracles, or how far such Proof is to be taken for the Truth of Doctrines above Reason. In my Opinion, *Eusebius*, we do not so much want the Definition of a Miracle, as some cer-
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tain Rule or Criterion of Judgment concerning it; and this I do not find that you can help us to. I take Mr *Locke's* Definition of a Miracle to be the best that has hitherto been given, because it is the only intelligible one, or the only one that we can apply, and judge of in Fact.

But I shall now suppose the Notion of Miracles, and its Use and Application in Practice, and to all the Ends and Purposes of Religion, to be perfectly well known and agreed upon; and that this Sort of Evidence is a clear, sufficient, and unexceptionable Proof of the Truth of those Doctrines and Principles, for which the Miracles are brought and urged, by the first Witnesses and Vouchers. I hope this Supposition will be thought full and ample enough, and I chuse to put it, *Eusebius*, to try what you can make of the Argument upon such an Hypothesis. Now upon this Supposition it must follow, that the Miracles were a clear, unexceptionable, and irrefragable Proof of the prophetic Messiahsip of Jesus; or that he was the Person, who was to bring about that glorious national Restoration, foretold by all their Prophets, and to which they had raised their Expectations: That this Jesus of *Nazareth* was the Person who was to restore the Kingdom, to gather together and unite the Twelve scattered Tribes, and bring all Nations into their Interest, to rebuild the Temple in a more splendid magnificent Manner than ever, to restore their antient Priesthood and Sacrifice, and
make

make this Law and Religion universal, to destroy any or every Nation who would not submit to it, and thereby to spread Truth, and Peace, and Righteousness, through the Earth, from this great King and governing People of *Israel*. This, Sir, was the Faith of the *Nazarene Jews*, or the Religion of the circumcised Christians in the Apostolic Age. For all which, besides the 60th Chapter of *Isaiab* already quoted, I would refer you to the 12 last Chapters of *Ezekiel*, where you have a full and plain Description of the Glory and Magnificence of this Temple, Priesthood, and whole Oeconomy, after this great prophetic national Restoration. And this Prophet does not describe it in the common mystical and visionary Stile of Prophecy, but in plain intelligible Terms, as much as if it was an historical Relation of Things already past. This was the *Jewish* national Idea of the Messiahship, and the only Difference between the *Nazarene Jews* and the rest, was upon the one single Question, whether Jesus was this prophetic Messiah or not. But for any Thing else, the *Nazarenes* were as zealous for the whole Law, and as stiff Adherents to it, as the *Pharisees* themselves. I think, *Eusebius*, I have plainly proved this in my foregoing Answer to *Sophronius*, and shall be ready to clear it up still farther, and make it plainer, if possible, when called to it.

You seem to be aware, *Eusebius*, that if the Miracles, as induced and urged by the *Nazarene Jews*, do not prove the prophetic Messia-

ship of Jesus, they can prove nothing at all as to Prophecy, or any Dependence of Christianity upon *Judaism*. And therefore, in your 6th Chapter you undertake to *defend from various Cavils, and gross Misrepresentations, the Character of Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah of the antient Prophets*. This is doubtless a very material Point, and, in a Manner, the sole Hinge of the Controversy between you and me, and therefore I shall debate it the more distinctly and freely with you. I have now, I think, given the complete Character of the *Jewish Messiah*, according to the Prophets, which you had justly blamed me for not having done before; but having at last acquitted myself in this, I am the more at Leisure to consider what you have offered upon it.

You make no Doubt, but great will be the *Triumph of the Jews among us, who, at least, should return me their public Thanks for my eminent Service to their Cause against their Christian Adversaries*. I know not what you may do, *Eusebius*, but I believe most People would doubt very much of any Triumph from the *Jews*, upon any Concessions of the *Moral Philosopher* in their Favour. They may triumph, perhaps, as they always have done, over such Christian *Jews*, as would pretend to convince and convert the *Mosaic* and prophetic *Jews* upon their own Principles; but I dare say, they will never triumph over Christian Deists. And for my own Part, I can assure you, that I expect no Thanks from them for proving
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their

their prophetic Messiahship to have been a national Delusion from first to last, and that their Priesthood and Sacrifices could be nothing else but Imposture, Enthusiasm, Superstition, and false Religion. The learned Men among us, who of late Years have attempted to defend the literal Accomplishment of the Prophecies, have been so manifestly baffled and confounded, that I believe they have but little Inclination left to pursue the Argument much farther; and I can see no other Remedy, *Eusebius*, but that you must at last give up this modern literal Scheme, and, with the most antient Christian *Jews*, found your Christianity not upon *literal* but *mystical Judaism*; and upon this Foot you might prove the Accomplishment of the Prophecies, and extract the whole of Christianity, or even the *Newtonian* Philosophy, out of *Moses* and the Prophets, if you pleased.

I had undertaken to prove, that Jesus Christ, as the common Saviour of the World, by a new Law of his own, and independent of the Law of *Moses*, was not the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah. And in order to prove this, I did not think it necessary to collect and put together every Thing out of the Prophets that related to their national Messiahship. I thought it sufficient to my Purpose, if I could make it plainly appear, that any one essential Character of the Messiah, such as should be necessary and fundamental by the Consent of all the Prophets, that any one such Characteristic, I

say, did not belong to Jesus, and that he had never assumed, but, on the contrary, renounced and disclaimed it. And this, I think, *Eusebius*, I had proved before you espoused the Cause, or knew any Thing at all of the Argument between *Theophanes* and me. I had made it evident, at least to any Man of Learning and Understanding in the Scriptures, that the prophetic Messiah was to deliver the Nation from all their Captivity, Bondage, and Servitude, to collect and unite the scattered Tribes, and to restore the Temple, the Priesthood, the Sacrifices, and the whole Oeconomy, in a more splendid and glorious Way than ever, and to extend this to all Nations. Now there is not one Word or Tittle of this that can agree to Christ and the Gospel-Dispensation.

But, say you, the Character you here give of the *Jewish* Messiah is not the whole Character, Description, or Definition of that Person, there are other Things mentioned of him besides this. It may be so, and I never pretended otherwise. But this is an essential Part of that Character, Description, or Definition; and no Person whatever, who does not answer to this, who never made any such Pretensions, but, on the contrary, disavowed, disclaimed, and renounced it all, can possibly be admitted as the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah. Here it is, *Eusebius*, that the Matter sticks between you and me; this is the very Hinge or turning Point of the Controversy; and
therefore

therefore I am sorry to find, that, in such a Case, you should think *Evasion* more necessary than *Argument*. I might exemplify this evasive Way of your's in some familiar Instances which I spare, as not being at all inclined to Ridicule, while I am talking with you. But this I must say, and, I hope, without Offence, that it is as impossible to prove a Person to be the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah, to whom the Characters I have mentioned do not agree, as it would be to prove any Creature to be a *Man* under moral Government, that is neither *rational* nor *risible*.

The Passages you quote from *Isaiab* and other Prophets, to prove the Universality of this Kingdom, and that the Messiah of the *Jews* should extend his Dominion over all Nations, and bless them with Prosperity, Peace, and Righteousness, from his own People *Israel*; these Passages, I say, do not in the least contradict any Thing that I had said, but farther confirms and strengthens it. For still this was to be a Temporal Kingdom, a Kingdom of this World, or a *Mohammedan* Paradise; and not one of the Prophets you refer to, spoke one Word of a future everlasting Kingdom of Glory, to be obtained by Sufferings, Afflictions, and the various Exercises and Trials of Faith and Patience in this Life. You seem willing to persuade me, that the Prophets preached the Gospel, and that *Isaiab* especially preached Christ, and the Nature of his Kingdom, as much as *St Paul*. But all this is

to me mere Imagination, and you might as well tell me that *Isaiab* taught the Arithmetic of Infinites, or the Doctrine of Fluxions, since his Kingdom of the Messiah has no more Relation than that to the Church of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Nay this Kingdom of the *Jewish* Messiah, as described by the Prophets, is directly opposite to the Church of Christ upon Earth, as preparatory to the Kingdom of Heaven, which Geometry and Algebra are not. But *School-Divinity*, I find, is a Science not to be understood by any but Critics and Metaphysicians.

You are so loth to give up the Prophets, and their temporal Paradise upon Earth, that you seem rather inclined to think that all this is yet to come, and must be accomplished in the latter Days, and final Period of the Christian Church. The Kingdom must yet be restored to *Israel*, together with their Law, their Temple, their Priesthood, and their Sacrifices, and all Nations must receive the true Religion, the Knowledge of the true God, and the right Way to Salvation from them at last, according to *Isaiab*, *Ezekiel*, and their other Prophets. That nothing of all this is yet past, is very certain, and that it is future, I am sure, cannot be proved; nor is such a Supposition consistent with any Principle of Reason, with the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, or with the Conduct of Providence from first to last. Could you convince the *Jews* that Jesus whom they crucified would at last bring about
such

such a Revolution in their Favour, no doubt but they would all embrace Christianity. But instead of that, you only set them a laughing, and confirm them the more in their Infidelity.

You afterwards give us a List of about thirty *Jews* converted to Christianity, to shew that I was mistaken in saying it is impossible to convince the *Jews* upon *Jewish* Principles. But I did not pretend that no *Jews* could ever be brought to profess Christianity upon some Motives or other, either of Conviction or Interest; and where there is nothing of Interest in the Case, Men often change their Religion upon false Principles, as when Protestants turn Papists, or the like. But when I said the *Jews* could never be convinced upon *Jewish* Principles, my Meaning was, that it is impossible ever to reconcile the *Jewish* and Christian Principles about the Messiah, and that if one be true, the other must be false; and consequently that no *Jew* can rationally and consistently embrace Christianity upon the Foot of *Moses* and the Prophets. And this, *Eusebius*, I think, I have proved, at least we have had the Experience of 1700 Years; while, under the Light of the Gospel, and all the Labours of the most learned Christians, that People still continue under their Unbelief, and deriding the strange Use and Application which we make of their Prophecies. I may say therefore, that their Conversion upon such Principles is impracticable, as all Experience has testified.

I believe no *Jew* ever became a Christian, but on a Supposition that the Prophecies which are not yet fulfilled, shall some Time or other be made good to that Nation. But he who should undertake to prove this, must be either a Person of great Subtilty and Acumen himself, or have a very weak Man to deal with. There is nothing in our Gospels, or Epistles, that can give us the least Reason to expect such a temporal Kingdom, or earthly Paradise, as the Prophets describe. When Jesus saw that he could not bring that Nation to Repentance, that the Multitude followed him only for the Loaves and Fishes to fill their Bellies, and to hear good News of better Times, while they had no spiritual Sense or Feeling, no Hunger or Thirst after Righteousness, he gave them up as incurable, and as utterly lost and abandoned, as a Nation or People; and accordingly he pronounced their final Dissolution, and the utter Destruction of their City, and Temple, and whole Polity, without the least Hint or Intimation of their ever being recalled, or made a People more. He wept and lamented over *Jerusalem*, wishing *she had known in this her Day*, this her last Day of Trial, *the Things which belonged to her Peace, but now they were for ever hid from her Eyes*. And when he gives an Account of his second Coming, it was to raise the Dead, to pass the final Sentence, to receive the Righteous into his heavenly everlasting Kingdom, and to Doom the Wicked to utter Destruction and

I Perdition;

Perdition; and not restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, to rebuild the Temple, and to extend the Dominion of that Nation over the whole World, which was the vain Hope and Expectation the antient Prophets had raised them to, and which had all along turned the Heads and blinded the Eyes of that whole Nation. And though some *Jews*, here and there one in an Age, have been brought over, upon this Hope and Expectation confirmed to them by the Christians from their own Books, yet such Instances have been very rare; and, generally speaking, some other Motives for it have appeared, besides a real rational Conviction. But could you bring your List of *Jews* converted upon such a Principle to several Hundreds, *Eusebius*, as you say you could; this would be no Argument at all against me, unless you could set aside what I have offered against the prophetic Messiaship; and for one *Jew* converted to Christianity, I might undertake to give you a thousand Christians embracing the Faith of *Mohammed*. Where is now the Christianity of the whole Eastern *Roman* Empire, both in *Greece* and *Asia*? Dean *Prideaux* had once intended to write the History of that strange Revolution and Apostacy to *Mohammedism*, but he dropped the Design, as being loth to revive the Distractions and Disputes about Revelation, which had occasioned it. The sharp uncharitable Disputes about the Trinity, Incarnation, Hypostatical Union, and the Distinction of Substances, Persons, Natures, &c.

had

had divided, inflamed, and torn to Pieces those Eastern Churches, so that they easily embraced another Religion that was less mysterious, and that would sit easier upon their Understandings. The Belief of one God, and one Prophet, as the Revealer and Declarer of his Will, was but a short Creed, which had nothing mysterious in it. And this being once professed, there was nothing else left to be contended and wrangled about. This Prophet, tho' an Impostor, was a Man of a great Genius and deep Penetration, and therefore took effectual Care to prevent all such Distractions, Contentions, and Divisions about Mysteries, and Things above Reason, which he saw had ruined the Christians.

Nothing but the pretended Mysteriousness of Christianity, as a Revelation above Reason, could have prevented its farther Propagation, and more general Reception; and nothing else could have occasioned the Fall of the Eastern Churches, and the sudden Rise of *Mohammedism* upon it. It may here, perhaps, be objected, that *Mohammed* propagated his Religion by the Power of the Sword, and that the Christians were forced into it; but nothing can be more false than this. It is true, he demolished and destroyed all Idols, and would not suffer Idolatry in his Dominions; but then he tolerated all the Worshippers of the one true God; the *Jews*, the *Magians*, and the Christians; and they are tolerated in all the *Mohammedan* Countries to this Day. There are vast
Numbers

Numbers of *Jews* now in *Constantinople*, the Metropolis of the Empire, and 9000 of them are said to be carried off by the Plague this last Year; and the Christians, in all Parts of that vast Empire, are much more numerous.

But now I am talking of *Mohammed*, I must beg Leave, *Eusebius*, to make a little farther Digression, as I am no Friend to Mystery or Revelation, above Reason, of any Sort. It is then I think, plain from the Koran, commonly called the Alcoran, that this Impostor had made himself Master of the Oriental Languages, and that he very well understood the main Principles, Nature, and Genius, of the three most famous and extensive Religions, or Schemes of Revelation, at that Time; namely, the *Jewish*, the *Magian*, and the Christian Revelations. He had sufficient Opportunities for this in the Space of 23 Years; during which Time he had been employed in merchandizing through *Persia*, *Arabia*, *Syria*, and *Egypt*, before he came to the Age of forty, when he opened his Commission as a Prophet. But the Impostor kept all this acquired Knowledge to himself, and pretended to be perfectly ignorant and illiterate, and that he knew nothing, in a natural or acquired Way, of the Learning, Religion, or Languages of *Asia* at that Time, excepting his own native Tongue; and as to this too, he had never learned to read or write. And herein lay the whole Depth and Strength of the Impostor. For admitting this to be true, it would be the strongest Proof of Inspiration, Revelation, or supernatural

supernatural Assistance that ever had been given in the World, or that could be given. For it is allowed by all the learned Critics, that his Book is the Test and Standard of the Purity, Sublimity, Elegance, and Oratory of the *Arabic* Language, and it gained that Approbation and Character among the most learend and celebrated Philosophers and Orators in *Arabia* at that Time, though they were all Idolaters, and the most bitter Enemies to *Mohammed* and his Doctrine of one God. And therefore to suppose that *Mohammed* should arrive to all this Perfection of Language, Oratory, and Philosophy, and be able to compose a Book out of all the revealed Religions then known in the World, by a Confederacy with some mean infamous Apostates and Fugitives, without knowing any thing of the Matter himself, is the most improbable and incredible Thing in the World. And I was surprized to find Dean *Prideaux*, among others, to run into this weak indefensible Notion ; a Supposition which has given the *Mohammedans* greater Strength and Triumph than any thing else could have done, unless the *Jews* and Christians had owned him to be a true Prophet, and that he had it all by Inspiration, immediate Revelation, or supernatural Assistance from God. For a Person of such extraordinary Abilities and extensive Knowledge of the World, without any supernatural Assistance, cannot be produced either on the *Jewish* or Christian Side.

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This Impoſtor took from *Mofes* and the *Jews* his Notions of Inſpiration, immediate Revelation, and familiar Converſe and Intercourſe with God and Angels; his abſolute Decrees, and Covenant of Peculiarity with God's true, faithful, viſible, and Catholic Church; the divine Appointment of Circumciſion, as the outward viſible Mark of this national Election and true viſible Church; and the Multiplicity of Wives and Concubines, with the divine Right of arbitrary Divorcements. But as to this laſt, he reformed very much upon *Mofes*, and mitigated the unnatural Rigour of his Law, by limiting the Number of Wives and Concubines; and allowing, in moſt ordinary Caſes, an Appeal in Favour of the Woman, which *Mofes* had not done.

From *Zoroaſter* he borrowed his Account and Deſcription of Paradife, and the bodily or ſenſitive Joys and Pleaſures of the Bleſſed after Death, with the Bodily Pains and Tortures of the Wicked when the Soul was ſeparated from the Body, and they had no Body to enjoy or ſuffer in, or any bodily Organs to act by; and from this Fountain likewise he drew his temporal and eternal Punishments of wicked Men after Death. Some were to be puniſhed for a longer, and others for a ſhorter Time; but all common Sinners were to be delivered and reſtored to Happineſs at the Reſurrection; while Idolaters, Infidels, and Apoſtates from the true Faith, were to remain in Hell, or a State of Punishment, for ever, or to all Eternity. And theſe Notions the *Jews* had taken

taken from *Zoroaster* and the *Persians* many hundred Years before, or in the Days of *Zoroaster* himself, who lived almost a thousand Years before *Mohammed*. Wicked immoral *Jews* were to be punished for a certain Time, and then to be restored, provided they had died in the true Faith; but Idolaters, Infidels, and Apostates, were to be punished for ever; and this Punishment could never be remitted or taken off, *either in this World, or in the World to come.*

This Impostor likewise went so far with the Christians, as to take many Things from them, and to own Jesus Christ to be a true Prophet sent from God, to suppress Idolatry and reform the World: But at the same Time he charged the Christians home as having corrupted their Religion, and recorded many Things of their Prophet which he never could have delivered or intended. And though the Christians at that Time might be thought to worship three Gods, yet as they all declared against it, and professed to worship only the one true God, *Mohammed* did not consign them over to eternal Torments, but yet made their Punishment greater and more lasting than that of the *Jews* and *Magians*, who worshipped the true God without any Suspicion of Idolatry. The Impostor could but just acquit the Christians of that Time, from the Charge and Punishment of Idolatry and Polytheism, and which he thought a Matter of great Favour to them. But he had taken enough from *Moses* and *Zoroaster* before, to mar and corrupt the true,
pure,

pure, and original Doctrines of Christ and the Gospel, and to compound a Religion of his own, consisting of a strange Mixture of Truth and Falshood blended together in human Policy. But however false his Religion might be, as it certainly was a false Religion, yet the Event has proved that his Politics were right, and that he contrived the best Scheme of Superstition that ever was invented, which, I hope, *Eusebius*, our Friend *Warburton* will consider. But I am fully satisfied, for my own Part, that Jesus Christ and St *Paul* never annexed the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death, to any Method or Scheme of external political Obedience or Superstition whatever. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his best and only Expositor and Interpreter St *Paul*, always affixed the Sanctions of Religion to the inward, spiritual, and divine Temper; and he who does otherwise, gives the plain Marks and Characteristics of Imposture or Enthusiasm, and confounds *Religion* with Superstition. To place *Religion* either in doubtful disputable Speculations and Opinions, or in external Rites, Ceremonies, and Modes of Worship, which have no Relation to, or Connexion with, moral Rectitude and true Goodness, is the very Essence of *Superstition*; and has proved the Ground of all the Flames and Divisions, Plagues and Miseries, which have been brought upon the Christian World, about what has been weakly or wickedly called *Christianity* and *Revealed Religion*.

I have

I have given this short Account of these three different Schemes of Revealed Religion, that the common Reader may be the better able to compare and judge of them ; and how far they either agree with, or differ from, the Christian Revelation, as you represent it. You have undertaken, *Eusebius*, to give us in a distinct categorical List of revealed Fundamentals, or the Fundamentals of Revelation as distinguished from the Religion of Nature or moral Principles of Reason. I am the more obliged to you for this, and under the most special Engagement to consider it, as it is what no learned Divine, that I know of, would ever undertake before. The learned *Chillingworth* could never be prevailed on to do it, though so much tempted and provoked to it by his Adversary ; for he knew that he could not fix upon any two distinct Principles of Christianity, but what Protestants themselves would differ in, when once it came to be limited to any one certain determinate Sense ; and nothing can be fundamental to Christianity, that is doubted of and disputed among Christians themselves, as nothing could be fundamental to Protestantism that Protestants are not agreed in ; and surely that can never be a fundamental, or an essential distinguishing Part of Christianity as such, which does not distinguish Christianity from any other Religion. But, *pag.* 428, you reduce these doctrinal fundamental Points of Christianity, Revelation above Reason, or *Positive Religion*, to five general Heads, which I shall distinctly consider.

The

The first and the most material is this : “ *As to Doctrines and Principles* peculiar to it, such is the Doctrine of one Mediator between God and Man, Christ Jesus the blessed Messiah and Son of God, by whose Merits, Intercession, and Atonement, we obtain Remission of our Sins, and eternal Life and Happiness.” You must needs know, *Eusebius*, that these Words, *Mediation, Merit, Intercession, Atonement, Remission of Sins, &c.* are Terms of a very general, doubtful, and indeterminate Signification. To represent all the different Constructions that have been put upon them, and the Disputes raised about them, by the different and opposite Parties and Factions among Christians, would require a distinct Treatise. The two most opposite Factions, the *Antinomians* and *Socinians*, will allow you the general Scripture Words and Phrases ; and if the Doctrine consisted in that, they must be all agreed, all equally good Christians ; and farther than this, you have said nothing of the Matter. I had offered a great deal against the common, sacrificial, vicarious Scheme, as contrary to Reason and Scripture, and as having no Foundation, even in the Law of *Moses*. And what I had here offered must still hold good, for any thing you have brought or urged to the contrary.

Another fundamental Doctrine you mention, is, “ of a Covenant between God and Man, offering and insuring to Mankind, by express Stipulation, certain Benefits and Privileges of the highest Importance, on our due Performance of certain Conditions.” But

what those *certain Conditions* are, which are the fundamental Articles of this *express Covenant* between God and Man, you cannot say, and I believe you would not find any two learned Divines in *England* agreed about it. But here you are still bringing in your Fundamentals of *Positive Religion*, without being able to clear up any one of them; for though you seem condescending to some Particulars, yet you leave them in such a general indefinite Way, as not to make yourself accountable for any one clear determinate Proposition about it: and this, surely, is an easy Way of being an orthodox Christian, and an able Divine, by using Words without Meaning, and leaving the Sense to shift for itself.

The *Moral Philosopher* addresses the Deity with a firm and full Trust in, and Dependence on, him, as his Creator, Preserver, Protector, Guardian, and supreme Good. And this he does, perhaps, upon surer Grounds of paternal and filial Relation, than any verbal or written Covenant could amount to. I take it for granted, that this Way of representing Things in Scripture is founded in the eternal, necessary, and immutable Reason of Things, and that those whose Understanding God had thus far enlightened, and whom he had raised up for that Purpose, were perfectly in the right, when they represented the most necessary eternal Truth in this positive authoritative Way. They had better Authority from God for doing this, than if an Angel had spoke to them, or they had concluded

cluded it from any extraordinary sensible Appearances, in which they might have been very liable to Deception. St *Paul* has largely proved, that the Covenant of Faith and Righteousness which God made with *Abraham*, was in him to all Mankind, or with all Believers, who should come up to *Abraham's* fiducial Trust and filial Obedience; and nothing can be more clearly written in Nature and Reason than this, that where Man is a dutiful and obedient Son, God will be a true Friend and most gracious Father; and that he will never fail or forsake those who filially love, and fear, and fiducially trust, in him. No Scripture, no Faith in Miracles, or sensible Appearances, how extraordinary so ever, can be clearer, or so clear as this, for it is written in the most legible indelible Characters through all Nature.

A third fundamental of Positive Religion which you mention, is, “ the Doctrine of a *Father*, “ *Son*, and *holy Spirit*, all plainly represented in “ Scripture as divine in Nature, and concurring respectively and eminently in the great “ Work of our Redemption, and therefore proposed all as the high Objects of our Faith and “ Worship.” This Doctrine of three Persons, in the supreme Deity, in three distinct though not separate Creators, Governors, and Redeemers of the World, who are all equally the Objects of supreme Adoration and Worship, has lately been so much disputed, and Dr *Waterland*, the great modern Patron and Defender of it, has fared so ill in the Controversy, that I was surprised

prized to find you mention it as a Fundamental, without considering how great a Part of the Nation, and even of your own learned Divines, you unchristen at once. Dr *Clarke*, indeed, to whom you here refer, allowed, or supposed the *Personality* of the Spirit or Holy Ghost; but this he did upon very slight Evidence, and he might as well have made distinct Persons of Sin, Death, and Hell, of the good and bad Spirit, Temper, and Disposition in Man, or even the Heavens and Earth distinct personal Agents; for under such personal Terms they are often represented and spoken of: But Dr *Bennet*, you know, who was a very learned Divine, denies the Personality of the Spirit, and argues strenuously against it. And whenever you shall think fit, *Eusebius*, to engage in this Argument, and undertake to prove the distinct Personality and Agency of the Spirit, I believe you will have no Reason to boast much of your Success in the Controversy. It could be to no good Purpose now, to renew a Controversy about a Point that has been sufficiently canvassed already; but I think you ought not to have made so dark and disputable a Doctrine fundamental and essential to Christianity; and I hope you will not pretend to prove, that upon such a Test as this, the *Nicene* Fathers could be Christians.

Your next Fundamental of *Positive Religion*, is, “ the Doctrine of extraordinary Aids and
 “ Grace *from the holy Spirit*, conferred on all
 “ true and sincere Believers, in Consequence of
 “ Christ’s

“ Christ’s Ascension into Heaven, and Entrance
“ into his glorious Kingdom.” You here represent the Spirit as an *Agent*, as aiding, assisting, and giving Grace, &c. without any real Foundation in Scripture, that I know of. The *Holy Ghost*, or the *Spirit*, is always represented and spoken of as the Thing given, and is put for some Power or Gift from God, either ordinary or extraordinary, but never as the Giver or Bestower of itself. God has promised to give his holy Spirit to those who ask and seek it, *i. e.* the Spirit of Peace and Love, Truth and Righteousness, or the inward spiritual and divine Temper : And I believe wherever the Word Spirit or Holy Ghost is mentioned, it always signifies some Effect or Manifestation of God’s Power, either ordinary or extraordinary, and is never, in a strict and proper Sense, taken personally ; but I would not dispute with you much about *Fundamentals*. But surely all Mankind, Heathens, *Jews*, or Christians, who have ever believed in or worshipped the true God at all, have prayed to him, and depended on him, for his Aid and Assistance, for the Practice of Virtue and true Religion, or for working them up into the divine Spirit and Temper ; and this Hope or Dependence is fundamental to all Religion, even to the Religion of Nature, and cannot be peculiar to Christianity.

The last Fundamental you mention, is the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* ; but you were very sensible that this is no peculiar Doctrine of Christianity, and that it cannot distinguish

Christians from *Jews*, *Magians*, or *Mohammedans*; the two former of which had received and plainly taught this Doctrine long before Christ's Time. You were so well aware of this, that you endeavour to turn it off, by a long marginal Note; in which you observe, that *Zoroaster* having been of *Jewish* Extraction, before he set up his *Jewish* Religion in *Persia*, the *Persians* might probably receive this Doctrine from the *Jews*, and not the *Jews* from them. But the contrary, I think, appears very plainly: *Zoroaster* was not originally of *Jewish*, but of *Persian* Extraction; he was a Descendent of those People whom *Asarbaddon* the Great had placed in and about *Samaria*, in the Room of the ten Tribes that his Grandfather *Shalmaneser* had carried away Captive; and these *Cuthites*, afterwards called *Samaritans*, were transplanted out of the remoter Northern Provinces of *Persia*. If the *Jews* therefore had any Notion of a Resurrection, and a future State before the Rise of the *Persian* Monarchy, it must have been at this Time, from those Strangers who came and settled among them; but it does not appear, that they had so soon; for there is no *Jewish* Writer, Prophet, or Historian, that mentions any thing of those Doctrines, till that Nation came to be subject to the *Persians*. *Isaiah* was living at the *Assyrian* Captivity, and survived that Captivity above 30 Years: And though he gives so large an Account of the Messiaship, and the glorious temporal Kingdom, or earthly Paradise that Nation was to expect,

expect, yet he says not one Word of a Resurrection from the Dead, or any future everlasting State of Glory and Happiness, as a Reward for the Sufferings and Afflictions of this Life : But in the Days of *Zoroaster*, and under the *Persian* Empire, the *Jews* received those Doctrines of a Resurrection and a future State, as is plain from the Prophets *Daniel* and *Esdra*s, who lived at that Time ; and all their After-Historians and Writers who speak of it as generally received, and in as plain express Terms as the New Testament itself does.

That *Zoroaster* did not introduce those Doctrines in *Persia*, but found them there, is as plain from Dr *Hyde*, and the Authorities which he quotes, as any thing can be. The Truth is, that *Zoroaster* rather corrupted than reformed the *Persian* Religion ; he introduced among them the *Jewish* Scheme of Priesthood and Temple-Worship, which the *Persians* had never had before. The Orders he established among the *Magians* were exactly conformable to the *Mosaic* or *Jewish* Oeconomy of a High-Priest, chief Priests, common Priests, and *Levites* ; though he could not confine this Priesthood to any one particular Tribe or Family, nor ever make it hereditary, but he carried the Superstition of *holy Fire*, or Fire lighted in the Sunbeams, beyond whatever *Moses* and the *Jews* had done ; for he not only ordered it to be kept always burning in the Temples, which were then first built in *Persia*, but in every private Family Night and Day ; and he was solicitous about nothing more than having these Fires al-

ways kept in by Candle-light, or otherwise : And he instituted a great and peculiar Reward, for those who took Care of it, never to let the holy Fire go out Day or Night, in any House or Family. But I have said enough, I think here and elsewhere, to shew, that the Doctrines of a Resurrection of the Body, and of a future State of bodily Rewards and Punishments, Pleasures and Pains after Death, was not of *Jewish* and much less of Christian Original and Extraction. I can trace this Doctrine no higher than the *Medes* and *Persians*, who pretended to have received it from *Abraham* ; but when or from whom they received it, would, I doubt, be in vain to enquire now. This is certain, that the antient *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, believed the Immortality of the Soul, as did the *Essenes* among the *Jews*, but not the Resurrection of the Body ; they kept up, however, the Notion of future Rewards and Punishments, and believed this to be absolutely necessary to the Peace and Well-being of Society ; and this shews that such a Principle is necessary to the good of Society, and gives one a strong Proof, that it is really true, and that God does not govern the World by Deception. But how our Friend *Warburton*, *Eusebius*, will come off upon this Principle, with his divine Legation of *Moses*, must be left to Time and his further Reasonings : But this I think is plain, that you have left that Argument to him, which you might very well do, as he had undertaken it before you. He has bid an open Defiance to

all Deists and Free-Thinkers, who pretend to any Thing of Wit or good Humour in Religion, which he mortally hates. He is so kind as to offer his Assistance to open our Eyes, and to let us see something of Truth and Reason, which we could never do till his Book came out; and therefore, we hope, he will come to his Subject in the next Volume, which he has said nothing to yet. But doubtless he has something in Reserve, that we are shortly to see and feel too.

But the Question, *Eusebius*, will still return upon you, what is this Revelation above Reason, or what are those super-rational, unsearchable, or uninvestigable Doctrines, which the Miracles were wrought to prove? This is the Gordian Knot which you still leave as fast and indissoluble as ever. And while you refer to what other learned Men have said about it, only to evade the Argument yourself, you are doing just nothing. It is very plain, that the grand Point which the Miracles were brought and urged for by the *Nazarene Jews*, was the prophetic Messiahship of Jesus. This was the one and only Matter of Faith or Practice in which the *Nazarenes* differed from the rest, and particularly the *Pharisees*; and as to any Thing else, they never changed their Religion. You cannot but know that the prophetic Messiah was to restore the Kingdom, with the Temple, Priesthood, and Sacrifices, in all their Glory; to extend his Dominion over all Nations, and to diffuse Truth and Righteousness,

ness, Peace and Prosperity, through the Earth, from this his own peculiar People, for there could be no Salvation, no Blessings from God to other Nations, *but of the Jews*, from whom the Messiah was to spring, and among whom he was thus to extend his Kingdom. I have here mentioned nothing but what is an essential Part of this Character, and when you can prove that all this belonged to him, and was claimed by him, that he made good some Part of it while he lived, and promised to accomplish all the rest at his second Coming, you will then, doubtless, convert the *Jews*, and bring the Christian Argument upon them, with more Weight and Force than ever they have felt it hitherto.

As Miracles are intended to prove Things above all human Reason, so it is an Evidence which no human Reason can judge of. The Senses can only judge of Miracles and Supernatural Facts, in which they are most of all liable to Deception; and therefore all Defects of Understanding, all Ignorance of natural Causes, and all mistaken Facts have been ever put to this Account. If a Fact is mistaken, or cannot be accounted for, supposing it true, it is certainly a Miracle with him who mistakes it, or cannot naturally account for it. But surely as this is an Evidence or Sort of Proof which Reason cannot judge of, it can have no natural or rational Connexion with any *doctrinal Truth*. If the *Nazarene Jews*, or the Apostles and Disciples themselves aimed
at

at proving any Thing by the Miracles, it was certainly their temporal Kingdom or prophetic Messiahship; and therefore, when they had given up this national prophetic Faith and Trust, they had no farther Hope or Expectation from him, till the same Presumption and groundless Confidence came to be revived again. But your saying nothing directly to this, *Eusebius*, and labouring so much to evade it, if I was not otherwise fully satisfied of your Integrity, would look like flying in the Face of *Scripture*, and resolving to maintain a System of *School-Divinity* against it. Mr *Locke* in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, has proved, that the one single Point, as a Matter of Faith which the Apostles preached in and about *Judea*, after the Resurrection, was this, that Jesus was the true Messiah, according to the Prophets: And, I think, I have proved that our Jesus, or the true Christian Messiah, and Saviour of the World, never claimed that grand essential Character, of being the temporal Restorer and Deliverer of that Nation, and that he never promised any such Thing to bring it about, either then, or at any other Time. And if you would speak plainly and directly to this, *Eusebius*, I should be glad to hear from you again very speedily, and without losing much Time. Truth you know is never backward to show herself; she loves and seeks the Light, and needs no Put-offs or Evasions.

But I had quite mistaken, it seems, the Nature of the Argument from Prophecy. And

must own, *Eusebius*, such is my Dulness, that I have received no farther Information from all that you have offered to this Purpose. I can see nothing that Prophecy can prove by the Accomplishment, but that the Thing was foreknown. And it is plain to me, that the Prophets did not foresee Christ, or the Nature of his Kingdom. Christ himself was so far from giving them any Hope or Expectation of their prophetic Kingdom, that on the contrary he pronounced the utter Destruction of the Nation, with their Temple and Priesthood, without any the least Intimation of their ever being restored more, or brought together again as a People. I had put the Case, that any personal Character, good or bad, had been punctually and circumstantially foretold, as suppose of *Christ*, *Mohammed*, or the *Pope*. And then I observed, that nothing could be concluded from hence, but that these Things were foreknown, and that God had communicated it to Men; and consequently that the World is governed by a special Providence, or by Thought, Wisdom, Contrivance, and Design, and that every Thing does not come about from necessary Mechanical Causes. But you say, *page 133, Here, Philalethes, you mistake or disguise in every Part the Argument, that is usually drawn from Prophecy. And really there is so much Error and Confusion, and so little pertinent Truth in the whole Passage, that I could hardly believe Philalethes to be the Author of it.* This is indeed a very civil Rebuke, but
you

you will give me leave, *Eusebius*, to examine the Ground of it. And here I have no Intention to enter into any Controversy with you about the Necessity and Contingency of Actions, which would carry us quite off from the main Point. You could not surely imagine, that I designed to assert the natural, mechanical Necessity of Actions by any external Force or Compulsion, which would be absolutely inconsistent with the Idea of Will or Choice. The free Actions of Men, or what comes about by Will or Choice, cannot depend on any such natural, extrinsec, necessary Causes, by which one might predict an Eclipse of the Sun or Moon. But then the free Actions of Men, Will, or Choice, are subject to certain general Laws, Limitations, or Conditions of Action, as much as the Motion of the Sun and Moon; and it would be as absurd and contradictory to suppose a Man to will or chuse Evil absolutely, and as such, as it would be to suppose a Body to move in a Direction contrary to the impressed moving Force. The Choice of Evil as such, or as so considered upon the whole, is plainly repugnant to the very Idea of Will or Choice, and destroys it in Conception. We have no other Idea of *Certainty* but the *perceived Necessity* of a Thing, and where we have not this Perception, we can know or be certain of nothing. But surely no Body can think that God governs the World by *Contingency* or *Chance*, or that this is the true Notion of *Free Agency*, *Will*, and
Choice.

Choice. But I hope shortly to clear up these Matters a little farther in a distinct Treatise, concerning Providence, Moral Government, and Free Agency. But though this is nothing at all to the Controversy between you and me, yet I cannot drop it without taking Notice of one Passage more of your's, *page 155*, where you say, *But if you deny, that such Events as these, being purely contingent in their own Nature, can be certainly foreknown and predicted, it is contrary to plain Fact and Experience, as well as to the general Sense of Philosophers.* But if you could clearly prove, *Eusebius*, any Moral Action to be *purely contingent in its own Nature*, I should think you the greatest Philosopher that ever appeared. To confound *Free Agency* with *Contingency*, is to put all Creation and Providence upon *Chance*, and leaves you no Principle or Rule of Judgment at all, with Regard to Free Actions. A Thing that is purely contingent in its own Nature, must be in its own Nature uncertain, and no Understanding can be certain of a Thing that is simply and absolutely in its own Nature uncertain, as having no Cause or Reason either without or within itself, why it should be so, rather than otherwise. This is the Principle, upon which some learned Men have denied the Divine Prescience, and upon which Supposition they can never be confuted. But such Free Agency as this, a Liberty consisting in mere Contingency, would not be consistent with Moral Agency, nor with any Wisdom, Reason,

Reason, or Foresight in the Government of the World.

But you think I might have concluded with *more Reason and Propriety, that consequently the Prophets foretelling such future Events with so much Exactness and Certainty, were immediately inspired by God, and from him derived their supernatural Foreknowledge.* I am sure I never denied this, but did, I think, suppose it, and left you to make the best of it. But I cannot see, that you make any Use at all of it to your own Purpose, or against me, as to the Proof of any Doctrines. The Prophets might be inspired or supernaturally assisted in the Knowledge of future Events, and yet at the same Time might be greatly mistaken, and very erroneous themselves, in Doctrinals of great Consequence. It is very plain, I think, that the Foreknowledge of future Events cannot at all affect or alter the Character of Persons, or the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines; but are just such as they are in themselves, and such as they would and must have been, whether they had been foreseen and foretold or not. This you saw so very plainly, that you found it necessary to grant it, and bid me welcome to the Concession, *page 159*; and yet you are presently *quite amazed* that I should apply this to *Mohammed* and the *Pope*, as if there was no Difference in the Characters of *Christ* and *Mohammed*. I must here profess, *Eusebius*, that I am as much *amazed* as you, if the Accomplishment of Prophecy proves Inspiration,

piration or immediate Revelation from God, the Prophecies relating to Mohammed and the Pope, supposing them equally plain and clear, must prove that as much as the Prophecies relating to Christ himself. You urge the Accomplishment of Prophecy to no other Purpose that I can see, but to prove Inspiration or Revelation, and when I had supposed or granted a Thing that you could make no Use of, I can see no Occasion there was for any such *Astonishment*. But I am glad however, that your Proof from Prophecy, as to what you would really conclude from it, is not at all weakened or invalidated by any Thing I had said. I am therefore content that this Part of the Argument should rest where it is, upon the Concessions on both Sides. But as to the Prophecies relating to the Messiah being fulfilled in Christ, I think I have said enough to prove the contrary. It is evident beyond all reasonable Contradiction, that the prophetic Messiahship was to be a temporal *Jewish* Kingdom, and a State of universal Peace and Righteousness upon Earth, which is what Christ never promised or undertook for, nor did he ever give his Disciples the least Ground or Reason to expect it from him, either at that Time or any other. This as I have shewn was a national Delusion which they had been all along under, and I think I have given the true Reason and Occasion of it from their mistaking the Nature, Extent, and Conditionality of the *Abrahamic Covenant*. But the Prejudice was
so

so deeply and strongly riveted, that they could never conquer or get rid of it to this Day. And is it not surprizing, that these very prophetic Writings, that were intended to prepare the Way to Christ and his spiritual Kingdom, should have always proved the great Obstacle and Prejudice to the more general Reception and farther Propagation of the Gospel; and that the People with whom those Oracles of God were entrusted, should have been from that Time to this, the bitterest Enemies to Christianity? Doubtless, *Eusebius*, there must be some natural Reason for this, and the perverse Interpretation that we have made of their Prophecies, by turning a *temporal* into a *spiritual* Kingdom, has been the Ground of it all. But upon this Principle, if you go on with it, you will sooner lose your Credit as Christian Divines, than you will ever convince the *Jews* upon *Jewish Principles*. You may carry this Point as far as you will or can, but, upon any such Supposition, I shall always be a Christian against a *Jew*, and a *Jew* against a Christian, for I know of no such Composition, and so far as I can see, when you have said all you can, you must be a *Jew* or a *Christian*. The learned Christian Clergy have long endeavoured to compound this Matter, but with such ill Success, that, after a Trial of 1700 Years under the Light of the Gospel, they have made almost all the thinking Part of the Christian World Deists; so far as Men have had the Li-

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berty of thinking for themselves, and have not been punished for speaking their Minds.

The *Jewish* Scheme of Christianity, *Eusebius*, can never be supported but by Persecution and penal Laws, nor has it ever been otherwise supported from the Beginning of Christianity to this Day. It is in vain to attempt by Reasoning, to turn a temporal into a spiritual Kingdom ; and you must give me leave to say, that all the learned Christian Divines who have hitherto attempted it, have left Christianity and themselves too great Losers by it. You will say, perhaps, that these are peculiar Notions of my own, and that the most learned Divines and deepest Philosophers are against me. But this is not the Point in Question. If you have taken up with your Opinions and Principles, implicitly from Philosophers and Divines, you might have saved yourself the Trouble of talking with me. I should rather have one good Argument than a hundred thousand Quotations against me, for one might convince me as the other never can. Were you talking with a Catechumen, you might take this Method of Instruction, as every one must receive the first Rudiments of Knowledge upon the Authority of their Teachers ; but if you would not consider me in this Capacity, you should always urge your own Reason against me, and depend on no Authority at all. You know very well, *Eusebius*, that I do not believe the Infallibility of the Biblical Historians, and therefore you ought never to talk with me upon

on any such Supposition till you can prove it. And when this has been rejected, I wonder you should urge more modern and disputable Authorities, as if we must be determined by them. I am very sure, *Eusebius*, that I never studied any Art, Science, or Faculty, upon this Foot of *bare Authority*; nor do I think that this can deserve the Name of *Knowledge*, or make any Man ever the wiser. I might shew my Reading in this Way, but not my Judgment or Understanding.

But, *page 185*, and forwards, you come to a Point upon which, in Reality, the whole Controversy must depend; and therefore the intelligent Reader, I am sure, will forgive me, if I should here be a little the more particular. I had urged that *human Faith* could not be *divine Faith*, or that believing a Thing upon *human Authority*, could not be the same Thing as believing it upon *divine Authority*. Now the Sum of your Argument here is, that what you believe as a Matter of divine Faith, or upon divine Authority, is supposed to have come at first immediately from God by Inspiration; though you own at the same Time, that you have nothing but human, fallible Testimony for this, and as to any rational Evidence, independent of Authority, you do not pretend to: But to call a human, fallible, uncertain, and precarious Faith, *divine Faith*; and to pretend it to be founded on divine Authority, Inspiration, or immediate Revelation from God, I thought a very great Absurdity. For

at this Rate, all the Errors and Contradictions in the World may be *divine*, there is no Difference between *divine* and *human*, and we may be as well *divinely* as *humanly* mistaken. But you here take some Pains, *Eusebius*, to correct my misunderstanding, and to let me know by several Quotations, which I did not want, that our Protestant Divines never claimed an *infallible Faith*, as the Papists do. But, with Submission, I had never charged the Protestant Divines with claiming an *infallible Faith*, but with the Absurdity and Inconsistency of pretending to an absolutely certain and infallible *Rule*, for a most uncertain fallible *Faith*. If the Papists have an infallible *Judge*, and the Protestants an infallible *Rule*, their *Faith* must be equally infallible, so far as determined by the infallible *Judge*, or directed by the infallible *Rule*. But if they cannot perceive or determine the Sense of the infallible *Judge*, nor you of the infallible *Rule*, I beseech you, are you not both equally in the dark, and might you not as well own the *Judge*, *Rule*, and *Faith*, to be all equally human, and fallible? I wish, *Eusebius*, you could tell me what an infallible *Rule* is, which no Body knows the length of, so as to come to any Agreement about it, but what one shall make an Inch, the other shall make a Mile, both measuring at the same Time by the same *Rule*. Whatever you may think, I take this to be a very puzzling Point in *School-Divinity*, and the Hinge of the Controversy between the two most opposite Parties

Parties that are both equally for *Revelation above Reason*. Had I here a mind to digress so far, I could easily shew, that all the opposite, irreconcilable Façons in Religion, on both Sides, have granted and agreed in some false Principle or other ; by which Means both Sides have fairly confuted each other, without being able to defend themselves. This I take to be the Case in the Controversy between the Papists and Protestants, for so far as I understand it, the Dispute has never been about Infallibility itself, but the Subject of it. The Protestants have always claimed Infallibility in *Rule*, as much as the Papists in *Judgment*, and have been both equally divided among themselves. I mention this only as the Hinge and turning Point between them, but as to particular Doctrines, I know not which of them have been most absurd and inconsistent. But I here only refer, *Eusebius*, to the Doctrines of our first Reformers, and not to the present State of Religion, as it now stands among our Prelatical and Presbyterian Divines. I think we are widely departed from the Doctrines of our Reformation, and, if I mistake not, from the Doctrines of the XXXIX Articles of the Church of *England*.

But I would not draw you off from the main Point. Besides what I have offered already, I must take some Notice of several Things which you have incidentally dropt up and down in Opposition to me, with Regard to the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Re-

vellation above Reason, or of *Revealed*, as distinct from *Natural* Religion. I need not here repeat to you again, that by Revelation I mean the Religion of Nature revived, or the true Principles of Reason restored in Matters of Religion and Moral Rectitude; but shall take it for granted, that we are agreed as to the Point in Debate, so far as not to mistake the Question itself. Nothing, I think, can be more absurd, than to ground a fallible human Faith upon an infallible divine Testimony, since it is connecting together two Things that are absolutely inconsistent and incompatible. If the Rule be infallible, the Faith or Judgment built upon it, must certainly be infallible too, so far as it is conformable to the Rule, and where it has not this Agreement and Conformity, it must be a mere human fallible Faith, and cannot, with any Sense or Consistency, be resolved into a divine infallible Testimony. You have here a divine infallible Foundation, for a human fallible Faith, and to what Purpose then is such a Foundation laid, when no Body knows how to build upon it, or whether the Building rests upon that Foundation or any other? You have here a Rule which is absolutely divine and infallible in *itself*, but in all Respects human and fallible to *you*, as to any Judgment you can make of it. But to pretend to walk by an infallible Rule, without being infallibly guided and directed, is plainly inconsistent and contradictory. You secure to yourself an Infallibility, or Sub-

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ject of Infallibility, different from the Papists only in Name, Pretence, and Appearance; while the endless Contentions and Disputes on both Sides, one against the other, and among themselves, make it evident, that there is no infallible Guide, Rule, or Measure of Judgment at all, either on one Side or the other. But such Darkness and Confusion must always be the Consequence, when Men will resolve Religion ultimately into any mere positive Authority, prior to, and independent of, the rational Evidence and Moral Fitness of the Things themselves. And you have here, *Eusebius*, brought yourself into a Wood, out of which, I believe, you will hardly find your Way. *Theophanes* saw very well the Force of this Argument, and how it must come upon him, and therefore would not venture to make himself accountable for the Infallibility of the Biblical Historians, or for the infallible Evidence of Miracles for the Truth of Doctrines, supposing even the infallible Certainty of the Facts, which yet can never be proved, as depending on bare human Testimony.

But if those original Historians must be infallible, so far as you think fit to make them so, it would be proper to settle the Bounds of this Infallibility, or how far it extended. Were they infallible as *Historians*, or were their *Senses* infallible, and not liable to Deception like other Mens, or were they infallible Judges of Facts, as owing to a *natural* or *supernatural* Cause? Were they infallible in
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their Judgment concerning the temporal Prophetic Kingdom, or national Restoration, which they were so strongly persuaded of, and so earnestly expected at that Time, or infallible afterwards against St *Paul* with Regard to the Terms of Communion between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*? These are Matters of great Importance to be settled; but to harangue in general upon Infallibility without fixing it, is saying nothing.

Either the Miracles wrought by the Apostles and Disciples of the Circumcision, proved the infallible Truth and Certainty of all the Doctrines they taught, and Opinions which they held, concerning Christ and his Kingdom, or they did not. If they did, they must prove all the strong Prejudices they were under, concerning the temporal Kingdom and national Restoration; and of which vulgar Errors no Miracles or Inspiration ever cured them; they still continued their Obedience to the whole Law, as a Matter of Religion and Conscience to them, and they struggled hard in their Council to impose it on the *Gentiles*; and this was about 20 Years after the Resurrection of Christ, and their receiving the Holy Ghost, and they firmly expected the coming of Christ to his temporal Kingdom, in that very Age and Generation. Now surely they could have no special Inspiration or Revelation from God in all this, while they were under such gross Errors concerning the Nature and Extent of Christ's Kingdom, and the Laws by which it was to be governed. And if they were not infallible in every Thing concerning

cerning Christ and his Kingdom, I believe you would not undertake, *Eusebius*, to settle the Boundaries, or to shew wherein they were or were not infallible. If these *Nazerene Jews*, who were the first Preachers of Christ, were inspired, and infallible in all that they taught, there could be no other possible Way of Salvation, but by an actual Faith in Jesus, as the Prophetic Messiah, and being baptized in his Name; and all Men who had not this Faith and Baptism, were to be damned. But I think I have said enough already to prove, that there can be no Connexion between the Power of working Miracles, and the Truth of Doctrines, or the Righteousness of Persons: And the Pretence, that God cannot, in his Wisdom and Goodness, suffer Men to be imposed on by such Evidence, without controuling it by a superior Power of the same Kind, is an Impeachment of Providence, and a Contradiction to the Experience of the whole World. But the Truth is, that God never proposed Miracles, or a supernatural Exertion of Power, as the proper Evidence and Proof of Doctrines; and therefore, they who will be thus imposed on, or impose on themselves, ought not to blame God and Providence for it. Almost the whole World had been deluded and led away by the Pretensions to Prophecy, Revelation, and Miracles, while no superior Miracles had been wrought against them; and this is the Case of a great Part of the World now, where our Gospel never came. And all this has been occasioned by

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Mens giving up their Reason, and seeking for supernatural Proofs of Things above Reason ; and the more Men quit their Reason, and the moral Fitness of Things in Matters of Religion, and give themselves up to supernatural Proofs of Things above Reason, the more Imposture, Superstition, and false Religion must grow, and prevail, as we see now in all the Popish Countries, and among the *Greek Churches*. That the Doctrines of Christ are true and divine, as they enlighten the Understanding, and purify the Affections, I believe as much as you, and, I think, upon much more certain and solid Grounds, if you build your Faith upon Miracles.

I had put the Case of a Father, Master, or any Superior, sending Orders in a round-about doubtful Way to the Persons under his Care and Authority, without his own Hand or Seal, or any certain Mark or Criterion, internal or external, that it came from him. And from hence I concluded, that the Family, or governed Society, would do well to suspend their Judgment and acting upon it, till they could receive some more certain authentic Account from their Superior. And thus far you agree with me, that such Conduct of theirs would be perfectly right upon the Suppositions here put ; but you cannot allow that this Case has any Resemblance to the Case of Traditional Revelation, in which we are to receive Things as from God, without any Stamp or Signature of the moral Character, by any rational Evidence to our Understandings, prior to that absolute Authority

thority which is supposed to require it. You are very long, and laboured upon this Case for 30 Pages together, *pag.* 206—236 ; and it affords you great Matter of Triumph, and yet, for ought I can see, the Comparifon and Parallel must hold good after all. You take it for granted all along, that the Miracles were wrought, to prove certain Doctrines and Obligations of Positive Religion, which had otherwise no Ground or Reason either for their Truth or Usefulness. This is what you still suppose and argue upon, and yet you have not said one Word, and I am fully persuaded, that you cannot say any thing, for the Proof of it : You cannot tell us what those Doctrines and Duties of Positive Religion are, to which he has set the Seal of his Authority by Miracles, and made of standing perpetual Obligation to Christians ; you can produce no such Matters, either of Faith or Practice. As to the Points you mention, as peculiar and fundamental to Christianity, I have considered them already, and proved that either they are not peculiar to Christianity, or else that they cannot be fundamental, as being Matters concerning which Christians themselves are vastly divided, and about which they are never like to come to any Agreement. If the perpetual Obligation of Positives, and the Practice of Christ and the Apostles, as to what they complied with themselves, and required in others, could be confirmed by Miracles, this must prove the standing Obligation of the whole Law, even after the Death of Christ ; and in the
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same Way, all the *Jewish* Rites, Customs, and peculiar Notions, might be introduced into Christianity, and confirmed by the Miracles, Practice, and Command of Christ and the Apostles; and in the same Way the Papists would prove all their seven Sacraments by Miracles, as well as you can the two which you have retained. Now if Miracles cannot, and were never intended to prove the divine Authority and perpetual Obligation of any mere Positives in Religion, my Comparison and Parallel, as above, notwithstanding the Pains you have taken to set it aside, must still hold good in every Part of it; and that it does so, I must conclude, till you have farther cleared up the Matter, and shewn us what *Jewish* Positives are, and what are not, proved by Miracles: and till you have done this, *Eusebius*, you will in vain talk in such a general Way of the Evidence and Proof of Miracles, abstracted from all prior rational Evidence, or moral Fitness.

You spend a great Part of your 4th Chapter against Mr *Chandler*, who had maintained, that Miracles alone could not prove the Truth, Certainty, and divine Authority of Doctrines, without taking into the Account, the Nature and Tendency of the Doctrines themselves.

I am sorry, *Eusebius*, to find that you are of a different Opinion, while you have so little to say for it. I doubt not but Mr *Chandler* will be able to defend himself; but without entering into your particular Debate with him, I think
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I have defended his Notion already against any Thing that you have offered to the contrary: And when you have quitted the Evidence of Reason as prior to Authority, I cannot see what Guard you can have against any Imposture, Superstition, or false Religion in the World: I cannot perceive, upon this Foot, how you could convict any Impostor, but by denying the Facts, as he would doubtless as readily deny your's; and, perhaps, a third Person might deny both, and put you to clear up the *Truth* by *Faith*, and *Sense* too, above *Reason*; and then, *Eusebius*, you might very well pass for an extraordinary Reasoner. It is true, that Christ and the Apostles of the Circumcision taught the *Jews* very much in the authoritative Way, as they had been always trained up in that pupil-pedagogue Way, as I have largely proved. But St *Paul* did not thus preach the Gospel among the *Gentiles*, as all the Epistles and genuine Writings of that Apostle most evidently prove; but you seem, *Eusebius*, to be entirely for the *authoritative*, and against the rational Way of teaching.

Positive Religion, whether placed in speculative doubtful Opinions, or in external Modes, Rites, and Forms of Worship, which are indifferent in themselves, and have no Connexion with moral Rectitude, or particular Tendency to strengthen and promote the inward, spiritual and divine Temper, is the very Nature, Essence, and proper Notion of *Superstition*. And herein have terminated all the Disputes, Contentions, Wars, and Bloodshed of the Christian

stian World, while Religion itself has been quite excluded, and left out of the Question. A Man's speculative Opinions, which have no Connexion with moral Conduct, or his external Modes or Forms of Worship, in expressing his Sense and Acknowledgment of the supreme Being, is no more a Part of the Religion of the Action, than the Dress, Posture, or Tone of the Voice is a Part of the Man. These Things are variable at different Times, and in different Countries, as much as Dress, Language, Customs, Manners, and the like, which common Consent or Authority have settled, and may be altered or varied under different Circumstances, as all other Things of an indifferent and mutable Nature : But Religion, or the inward spiritual and divine Spirit and Temper, is still the same, and does not change with the Climate, Custom, or Language. Religion is a Thing, that can neither be produced nor destroyed by all the Methods of human Policy ; no Smiles of Fortune, or Favour of Princes and Patrons, can ever bring a Man to love God supremely, and his Neighbour as himself, but would be much more likely to have a quite contrary Effect ; nor can all the Frowns and Rage of Tyrants, or Terrors of this World, prevent or restrain this divine Spirit and Temper ; and placing *Religion* in any Thing else, is, as I have said, the very Essence of *Superstition*. Speculative Opinions and external indifferent Modes and Forms of Worship can have no Relation to *Religion* ; though all Religion must be clothed and

and circumstantiated with some such Modes and external Forms or other. To refuse Compliance with any such indifferent Rites and Forms, and to suffer for it, under the Notion of Religion and Conscience, is the Weakness of *Superstition*; and to force and compel any such Things against Conscience and inward Judgment, is the Wickedness and Outrage of it, rejecting such Things as Matters of Religion and Conscience, and suffering for Non-Compliance on the one hand, or penally imposing them on the other, are both equally founded in Superstition; but the one is simple Superstition, and the other Superstition complicated with Inhumanity and Injustice; one is the Weakness, and the other the Wickedness and Outrage of it. Common Humanity would incline us to be very tender of Conscience, and suffer Men to worship God in their own Way, while it is innocent and inoffensive to the Society; and human Prudence would dispose a Man to Compliance, in such Cases, without Force and Compulsion, rather than be any great Sufferer by it. The different Rituals and external Forms and Modes of Worship in different Countries and Church-Constitutions, provided there is nothing indecent or immoral in them, may be as well complied with as their different Customs, Dress, or Language. But such Compliance ought to be free and voluntary, and not forced or compelled. It is impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, to force *Religion* itself. Nothing under that *Name* can be guarded and promoted

promoted by Force and Compulsion but *Superstition*.

You may think, perhaps, that I am here running off from the Question, and talking beside the Purpose; but I shall never think so while I am supporting the true and only Distinction between *Religion* and *Superstition*. And as the Christian Religion is the best Thing in the World, I am sure Christian Superstition is the worst. And as long as you place Religion either in doubtful speculative Opinions, or external indifferent Rites, Ceremonies, and Modes of Worship, under a Pretence of divine Authority, I am sure, it must be in your Power, while the Laity are ignorant enough; to make your *own Interest Religion*, and to plague and punish every Body that will not, or cannot, come into your Scheme of *human Policy*, or *positive Religion*.

You must know very well, that all the Disputes, Contentions, Wars, and Bloodshed, of the Christian World, have been owing to the Ecclesiastical Pretence of *positive Religion*, or *Revelation* above *Reason*. And I wish the Patrons of this Scheme in Christendom had been as innocent and inoffensive to States and Kingdoms, as the Patrons and Priests of the old Heathen Superstition. But the contrary is too flagrant, and too sensibly felt in this unhappy Nation, where the Distinctions between Whig and Tory, High-Church and Low, Prelatists and Presbyterians, all grounded upon *Revelation* above *Reason*, have almost put us out of a
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Capacity of uniting in any common Interest, or National Self-Defence. And while this Humour prevails among us, of keeping up old Grudges, and Party-Distinction, at first founded in *Superstition*, and now continued and fomented by *State-Policy*, it is not likely that we should preserve our civil and religious Liberties, Peace and Happiness long. The divine Right of Episcopacy, or Presbytery; the Reasonableness of Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience; or the Necessity of rooting out Error and false Religion by Force; the revealed Obligation of absolute Non-Resistance and Passive Obedience; or the natural Right of Resistance and Self-Defence, in Case of Necessity; these are the hopeful Topicks upon which we have divided, and the Disputes and Contentions which we have had about *Revelation* above *Reason*. I wish there could be any Remedy for this; but I doubt the prevailing Party among us will always have Revelation on their Side, and mind *Religion* more than *State-Interest*, or national Happiness. But this must be always a Religion and Revelation above Reason.

I have said thus much, *Eusebius*, not to draw you off from the main Point; these are some of the peculiar Advantages of *Unrevealed Religion*, or *Revelation* above *Reason*; and how happy has it been for us, and is likely to be, that we have been, and continue to be, thus divided. But of all the Distinctions, either in *Religion* or *Policy*, that ever I have met with, I know no other but between a wise Man and

a Fool, or an honest Man and a Knave. If we could but keep to this Distinction, we might drop all others, and at the same Time maintain *true Religion* and *Civil Liberty* ; and to avoid, as much as possible, all former Disputes about Religion, I would only put this Question to you, Whether good Sense and Honesty, abstracted from School-Divinity, is not the best Test of Religion and Patriotism? And I am very sure, Sir, that natural good Sense, and natural Honour, may be better understood and defined than Revelation above Reason.

It could not be expected, that in this short Letter to you, I should enter particularly and minutely into the Argument of your whole Book, and much less into what is yet to come, for I pretend to no prophetic Spirit ; but this I may assure you of, that when we see your whole Work, I shall give it all the Attention and Regard that can be due to a Gentleman of great Learning, good Sense, free Inquiry, and a Friend to Mankind, such as I take you to be : And upon this Supposition, which I am sure is not merely presumptive, I shall here subscribe myself,

S I R,

Your real Friend

and humble Servant,

PHILALETHES.





Cleaned & Oiled

March 1987

